VOLTAIRE, MONTESQUIEU AND ROUSSEAU IN ENGLAND

J. CHURTON COLLINS

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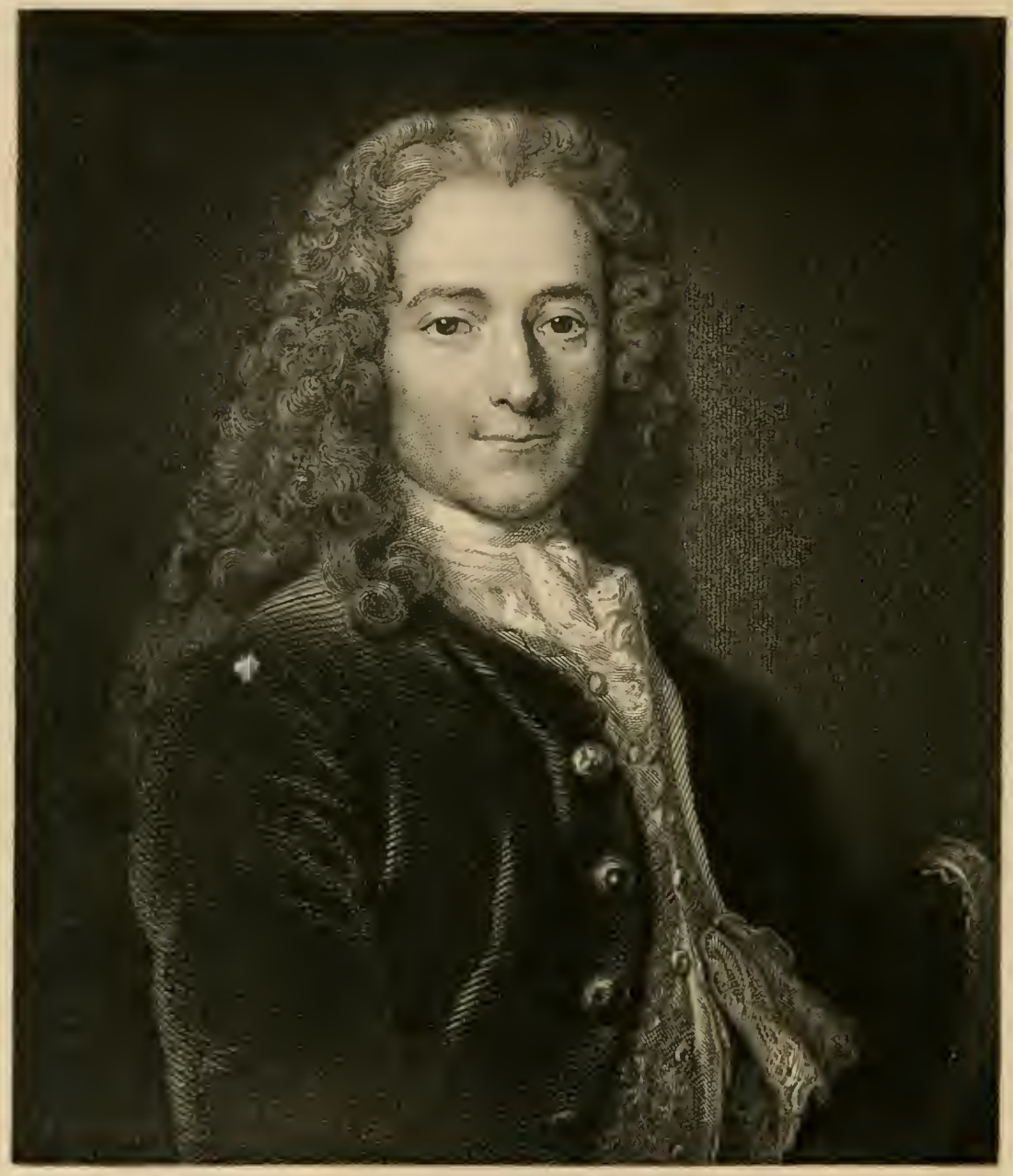

Voltaire.

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VOLTAIRE, MONTESQUIEU AND ROUSSEAU IN ENGLAND

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PREFACE

This book is an attempt to sketch the history of three singularly interesting episodes in the literary relations between France and England, namely, the visits of Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Rousseau, during periods extending respectively from the spring of 1726 to the spring of 1729, from the autumn of 1729 to the spring or early summer of 1731, and from January 1766 to May 1767. It is an attempt to supply what has not been supplied elsewhere, or indeed treated in any other way than occasionally and collaterally, by any previous writer, so far at least as I know.

The volume has grown up by successive accretions. The first sketch of the portion treating of Voltaire's visit appeared in the form of two articles in the *Cornhill Magazine* for 1882. In 1886 these articles were greatly enlarged, and in their new form appended to *Bolingbroke: a Historical Study*, published in that year by Mr. John Murray. They are now again revised and extended by the addition of much new material collected since, and assume here their final form. The first sketch of the

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portion dealing with Montesquieu appeared some years ago in the form of an article in the *Quarterly Review*, but that too is not printed as it there appeared, but has been carefully revised and also enlarged. So scanty, however, are the materials which throw light on Montesquieu's residence here, partly in consequence of the destruction of his full notes on England, and partly from the unfortunate disappearance of his correspondence with Chesterfield, that I regret I have not been able to add very much of importance to what I wrote before. I can only say that I have spared no pains to acquire new material: what consolation there may be lies in the probability that such material does not exist. The portion dealing with Rousseau appeared in its first form in the *Quarterly Review* nearly ten years ago. But this has been considerably revised and enlarged.

It remains for me now to thank those who have in various ways assisted me. I must begin, I am sorry to say, with acknowledging no indebtedness to Mr. Archibald Ballantyne's volume entitled *Voltaire's Visit to England*, published by Messrs. Smith Elder in 1893. I was obliged at the time to point out, in justice to myself, that the work simply appropriated, without one word of acknowledgment, the whole of the material collected by me,

and embodied in my essay printed in 1886 ; nor has Mr. Ballantyne added a single fact of importance to what he found there. Had he done so I hope I should have had the magnanimity to allow my gratitude for instruction to outweigh any little irritation I may have felt at not being quite fairly treated.

But to turn from an unpleasant to a more pleasing subject. To the great kindness of Mr. Henry Rutherford I am indebted for two hitherto unpublished letters of Voltaire written in English while he was at Wandsworth, and for an unpublished letter of Lord Peterborough's, throwing important light both on Voltaire's movements just before he left England and on his relations with Dr. Towne, an incident in his English experiences till now unknown to his numerous biographers; to Mr. Forbes Sieveking for most generously allowing me the use of the long and valuable letter printed in the Appendix, the original of which is in his possession. To Sir Maurice Boileau, of Ketteringham Park, Norfolk, I must express my thanks for his most kindly allowing the singularly interesting portrait of Rousseau, now in his possession, painted for David Hume by Wright of Derby in the spring of 1766, to be photographed for reproduction here. My other obligations to those who have, whether as strangers or friends, assisted me with material

or in research are duly recorded, as occasion offers, in the notes.

I am well aware what a trifling contribution this little volume is to the promotion of a branch of study the significance and interest of which we are only now beginning to understand, I mean the solidarity of the humanities, and the mutual influence which the chief literatures of Europe have exercised on each other both in relation to evolution and in relation to idiosyncrasies. It is only by minute investigation, and by investigation in detail, that real progress can be made in such a study. At present it seems to be represented rather by abstract generalisations than by generalisations based on facts; but unless in such inquiries the second precede the first there can be small security for soundness and truth.

Nor is this all. The literary relations of England and France have always been of peculiar interest, and have at no time been more intimate and influential than they are at the present moment. Such ties can never be drawn too close, and happy indeed should I be if I thought that this little volume could contribute, however slightly, to illustrate, from one point of view at least, the propriety and desirableness of what is now finding more important expression in the *Entente Cordiale*.

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VOLTAIRE, MONTESQUIEU, AND ROUSSEAU IN ENGLAND

VOLTAIRE IN ENGLAND

I

THE residence of Voltaire in England is an unwritten chapter in the literary history of the eighteenth century. And yet assuredly few episodes in that history are so well worth attentive consideration. In his own opinion it was the turning-point of his career. In the opinion of Condorcet it was fraught with consequences of momentous importance to Europe and to humanity. What is certain is that it left its traces on almost everything which he subsequently produced, either as the professed disciple and interpreter of English teachers, or as an independent inquirer. That visit, says Lanfrey, comprised "les années les plus fructueuses de sa vie."[1] It penetrated his life. "L'exemple de

[1] *L'Eglise et les Philosophes au Dix-huitième Siècle*, p. 113.

l'Angleterre," says Condorcet, "lui montrait que la vérité n'est pas faite pour rester un secret entre les mains de quelques philosophes et d'un petit nombre de gens du monde instruits, ou plutôt endoctrinés par les philosophes."[1] And he continues: "Dès ce moment Voltaire se sentit appelé à détruire les préjugés de toute espèce, dont son pays était l'esclave." Its influence extended to his poetry and to his criticism, to his work as a historian and to his work as an essayist. Nor is this all. The circumstances under which he sought our protection; his strange experiences among us; his relations with Pope, Swift, and Bolingbroke, with the Court, with the aristocracy, with the people; the zeal and energy with which he studied our manners, our government, our science, our history, our literature; his courageous attempts to distinguish himself as a writer in English—all combine to form one of the most interesting passages in his singularly interesting career.

But unfortunately no portion of Voltaire's biography is involved in greater obscurity. "On ignore," writes Charles Rémusat, "à peu près quelle fut sa vie en Angleterre. Ces deux années sont une lacune dans son histoire. C'est un point

[1] *Vie de Voltaire.* Prefixed to *Œuvres Complètes de Voltaire*, vol. i. p. 202.

de sa biographie qui mériterait des recherches." [1] Carlyle, who attempted in the third volume of his *Frederick the Great* to throw some light on it, abandoned the task in impatient despair. Mere inanity and darkness visible—such are his expressions—reign, in all Voltaire's biographies, over this period of his life. "Seek not to know it," he exclaims; "no man has inquired into it, probably no competent man ever will." [2]

It happened, however, that at the very time Carlyle was thus expressing himself a very competent man was engaged on the task. The researches of Desnoiresterres succeeded in dispersing a portion at least of the obscurity which hung over Voltaire's movements during these mysterious

[1] *L'Angleterre au XVIII. Siècle*, vol. i. p. 380.

[2] Carlyle's own account (*History of Frederick*, book x. ch. ii.), while leaving the general darkness visible, teems with blunders. He confounds the Chevalier de Rohan-Chabot with the Duc de Rohan; misdates the second fracas with the Chevalier; represents Voltaire's second imprisonment in the Bastille as lasting six months, whereas it lasted just fifteen days; calls Sir Everard Falkener, Edward, and evidently knows nothing at all about him; asserts that the *Henriade* was published in 1726 instead of 1728; represents, or appears to represent, Pope as having written the *Essay on Man* three years before it was written; says that Voltaire's visit to England lasted some two years, whereas it lasted two years and eight months; and actually states that Falkener and Bolingbroke are "perhaps the only names that turn up in Voltaire's letters of the English period." None of them very heinous offences, perhaps, but what would Carlyle have said had anyone else been the offender?

years. He took immense pains to supply the deficiencies of preceding biographers. Judging rightly that all that could now be recovered could be recovered only in scattered fragments, he diligently collected such information as lay dispersed in Voltaire's own correspondence and writings, and in the correspondence and writings of those with whom his eminent countryman had, when in England, been brought into contact. Much has, it is true, escaped him ; much which he has collected he has not, perhaps, turned to the best account ; but it is due to him—the fullest and the most satisfactory of Voltaire's biographers—to say that his chapter, " Voltaire et la Société Anglaise," must form the basis of all future inquiries into this episode in Voltaire's life. To higher praise he is certainly not entitled. Some of Desnoiresterres' deficiencies are supplied by Mr. Parton, whose *Life of Voltaire* appeared in two goodly octavos in 1881. Mr. Parton has made one or two unimportant additions to what was already known, but he has done little more. I gratefully acknowledge my obligations both to Desnoiresterres and to Mr. Parton ; but these obligations are slight.

The first point to be settled is the exact date of his arrival in England, and that date can, I think, be determined with some certainty. On 29th

April (O.S.) 1726 an order arrived for his release from the Bastille, on the understanding that he would immediately quit Paris and not return without express permission from the King, within at least fifty leagues of that city.[1] It was understood, though not required, that he would leave for England, as he had already announced his intention of doing so to the Minister of the Department of Paris.[2] On 2nd May he was released from the Bastille, and apparently on the same day was escorted by a Government official, one Condé, to Calais.[3] At all events, on May the 5th he was, as his letter to Thieriot and his letter to Madame de Ferriole prove, at Calais ;[4] and at Calais he remained for some days, the guest of his friend Dunoquet, the Treasurer of the troops. How long he remained at Calais we cannot say, as no documents have as yet been discovered which throw light on his movements between the 6th of May and the beginning of June. From his letter to Madame de Ferriole it

[1] Maurepas to De Launay, governor of the Bastille, printed in the *Documents Biographiques*. Voltaire, *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. i. p. 308.

[2] *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. xxx. pp. 157 and 158, these letters being dated respectively 5th May and 6th May.

[3] *Histoire de la Détention des Philosophes*, par J. Delort, vol. ii. p. 34.

[4] And see the Letter to A. M***, *Mélanges*, vol. i. p. 17.

certainly appears that he had no immediate intention of embarking. He asks her to send him news, and to give him instructions, and tells her that he is waiting to receive them. In all probability he continued at Calais, not as he had originally intended for four or five days, but for nearly five weeks, that is to say from the 6th of May to the 8th or 9th of June. In any case, whatever his movements may have been, it is difficult to suppose that he left for England before the 8th or 9th of June (N.S.), though this is, it is true, difficult to reconcile with "le milieu du printemps," the time he himself assigns for his landing at Greenwich.

He tells us himself that he disembarked near Greenwich, and it is clear from the passage which follows that he landed on the day of Greenwich Fair. That fair was invariably held on Whit-Monday, and Whit-Monday fell in 1726 on May the 30th (O.S.). Now, a reference to the *Daily Courant* for May the 30th shows that a mail arrived from France on Sunday the 29th, which would be, of course, according to the new style, 10th June. Supposing, therefore, that his visit at Calais was protracted to five weeks after his letter to Madame de Ferriole—and there is, as we have shown, no reason for supposing that it was not—the time would exactly tally. That he should have remained

on board till Monday morning need excite no surprise. But there is other evidence in favour of this date. In the remarkable passage[1] in which he describes what he saw on landing, he tells us that the vessels in the river had spread their sails (déployé leurs voiles), to do honour to the King and Queen (in adding the name of the Queen he was of course mistaken, as she was in confinement at Ahlen), and he particularly notices the splendour of the royal barge, the two rows of merchant-ships covering a space of six miles, and the rich liveries worn by the King's menials. We turn to the *London Gazette* for Monday, May the 30th, and we find that on that day, the King's birthday, the rejoicings for which had been deferred from the preceding Saturday, was "celebrated with the usual demonstrations of public joy"; and in the *British Gazetteer* for Saturday, May the 21st, we read that "great preparations are making for celebrating the King's birthday," and that "the King's menial servants are to be new clothed on that occasion." It may therefore be fairly inferred that Voltaire first set foot in England on Whit-Monday, May the 30th, 1726.

It was already known in England that he had been released from the Bastille, and that it was

[1] Letter to A. M***, *Mélanges*, vol. i. p. 18.

his intention to come to London.[1] With characteristic prudence he had induced the Comte de Morville, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, to obtain from Horatio Walpole, who had succeeded Stair as Ambassador at Paris, a letter recommending him to the notice and favour of the Duke of Newcastle. In accordance with Morville's request, Walpole wrote as follows to Newcastle, 29th May 1726—

"I hope you will excuse my recommending to you, at the earnest instance of M. de Morville, M. Voltaire, a poet, and a very ingenious one, who is lately gone to England to print by subscription an excellent poem called "Henry the Fourth." He has been indeed in the Bastille, but not upon the account of any State affair, but for a particular quarrel with a private gentleman; and therefore I hope your Grace will readily give him your favour and protection in promoting the subscription." [2]

He wrote also on the same day, making the same request to Bubb Dodington. Nor was this all. He gave him also a letter of introduction to the

[1] *British Journal* for 14th May 1726: "On the 3rd instant M. de Voltaire was released from the Bastille and conducted as far as Calais, being allowed to go over into England, and forbid to come within fifty leagues of the Court. 'Tis said he will publish in London a large edition of his famous poem of the League, whereof we have only an imperfect copy."

[2] Printed in the *National Review* for August 1892.

Comte, afterwards Maréchal and Duc de Broglie, then French Ambassador in London, asking him to present Voltaire to the members of the English Cabinet.[1]

On the voyage he had been the prey of melancholy thoughts. He drew, in the bitterness of his soul, a parallel between his own position and the position in which his favourite hero once stood. And his feelings found expression in verse—

> "Je ne dois pas être plus fortuné
> Que le Héros célèbre sur ma vielle :
> Il fut proscrit, persécuté, damné
> Par les dévots et leur douce séquelle.
> En Angleterre il trouva du secours,
> J'en vais chercher."[2]

But on landing he soon recovered his cheerfulness, and, throwing himself in a transport of joy on the earth, he reverently saluted it.[3] Many of

[1] See the letter recently discovered by M. J. J. Jusserand printed in the Appendix, and referred to *infra*, pp. 72–73.

[2] Quoted in the *Historical Memoirs* of the author of *the Henriade* (1778), where the writer speaks of having seen these verses in a letter in Voltaire's own handwriting, addressed to M. Dumas d'Aiguebere; they have since been printed in the *Commentaire Historique*, *Œuvres Complètes*, Paris, 1883, where it is stated that the poem ended with the couplet—

> "Je n'ai pas le nez tourné
> A être prophète en mon pays."

[3] Duvernet, *Vie de Voltaire*, p. 64.

his countrymen have described their first impressions of the land of Shakespeare and Newton, but to none of them has it ever presented itself as it presented itself to the fascinated eye of Voltaire. Everything combined to fill the young exile with delight and admiration. Though his health was delicate, he was in exuberant spirits. It was a cloudless day in the loveliest month of the English year. A soft wind from the west—I am borrowing his own glowing description—tempered the rays of the hot spring sun, and disposed the heart to joy. The Thames, rolling full and rapid, was in all its glory; and in all their glory, too, were the stately trees which have now disappeared, but which then fringed the river banks on both sides for many miles. Nor was it nature only that was keeping carnival. It was the anniversary of the Great Fair, and it was the anniversary of the King's birthday. The river between Greenwich and London was one unbroken pageant. Farther than the eye could see stretched, with every sail crowded, two lines of merchant-ships drawn up to salute the royal barge, which, preceded by boats with bands of music, and followed by wherries rowed by men in gorgeous liveries, floated slowly past. Everywhere he could discern the signs of prosperity and freedom. Loyal ac-

clamations rent the air, and Voltaire observed with interest that a nation of freemen was a nation of dutiful subjects.

From the river he turned to the park, and, curious to see English society in all its phases, he spent the afternoon in observing what was going on. He wandered up and down the park, questioning such holiday-makers as could understand him about the races, and the arrangements for the races. He admired the skill with which the young women managed their horses, and was greatly struck with the freshness and beauty of their complexions, the neatness of their dress, and the graceful vivacity of their movements. In the course of his rambles he accidentally met some English merchants to whom he had letters of introduction. By them he was treated with great courtesy and kindness. They lent him a horse, they provided him with refreshments, and they placed him where both the park and the river could be seen to most advantage. While he was enjoying the fine view from the hill, he perceived near him a Danish courier, who had, like himself, just arrived in England. The man's face, says Voltaire, was radiant with joy ; he believed himself to be in paradise, where the women were always beautiful and animated, where the sky was always clear, and where no one thought of any-

thing but pleasure. "And I," he adds, "was even more enchanted than the Dane." [1]

The same evening he was in London, in all probability the guest of Bolingbroke, at his house in Pall Mall, where he was, he tells us, presented to some ladies of the Court, to whom he related his experiences at Greenwich, taking it for granted that they had been present at the festivities witnessed by him. But he was soon undeceived. No people of fashion, he was coldly informed, ever frequented such scenes; that he had mistaken for ladies and gentlemen mere peasants, servant girls, and apprentices tricked out in holiday attire, and mounted on hacks hired for the day. He could, he continues, scarcely believe his ears or conceal his irritation from the lady who had had the charity so cruelly to disenchant him. The next day his introduction to society in England gave him a still greater surprise. Entering a dirty, ill-furnished, ill-served, and ill-lighted coffee-house, he found several of the merchants who had treated him with so much civility and cordiality at Greenwich the day before. On accosting them, however, they did not even recognise him, and a curt "Yes" or "No" was all the response he got when he attempted to

[1] Letter to A. M***, *Mélanges*, vol. i. p. 17 seqq., *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. xxii. pp. 18–20.

converse with them.[1] Thinking that he must have inadvertently offended them, and observing also that they were very depressed, he ventured boldly to ask what was the matter and why they were so miserable. Upon that one of them sullenly remarked that the wind was in the east, *qu'il faisait un vent d'est.* While he was speaking, one of their friends came in and said with the greatest indifference: "Molly cut her throat this morning; her lover found her dead in her room with a blood-stained razor beside her." Though Molly was a young, rich, and beautiful girl, and about to marry the man who had found her dead, the news was received with as much indifference as it was told. Voltaire remained some time, he tells, in mingled astonishment and perplexity, till the effects of an east wind on the temper and spirits of the English people were explained to him. Under its spell, gloom and wretchedness obtained everywhere. During the months when it prevailed people hung themselves by the dozen. Everyone was ill or in despair: it was the curse and ruin of the island. It was an east wind that beheaded Charles I., and an east wind that dethroned James II. "And if,"

[1] Pollnitz, writing in 1733, notices this same peculiarity of the English, which he attributes to their reserved and melancholy temper. *Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 454.

added the Court doctor who told him all this, "you have any favour to ask at Court, you will never get it except when the wind is in the south or west." [1]

It is not unlikely that Voltaire's first host in England was, as I have already conjectured, Bolingbroke, who had a town house in Pall Mall. His acquaintance with that distinguished man had begun at La Source in the winter of 1721. Their acquaintance had soon ripened into intimacy, and though since then their personal intercourse had been interrupted, they had exchanged letters. At that time Bolingbroke was an exile; he had recently obtained a pardon, and was now settled in England, where he divided his time between his town house in Pall Mall and his country house at Dawley. The friendship of Bolingbroke would have been a sufficient passport to the most brilliant literary circles in London, but as the connection of Bolingbroke lay principally among the Tories, the

[1] Letter to A. M***, *Mélanges*, vol. i. Making all allowance for Voltaire's exaggeration, we find a curious corroboration of what he here relates in one of César de Saussure's letters, dated 29th May 1727. He not only speaks of the terrible frequency of suicide, but says that he himself was attacked by the mania, which he attributes not to the influence of the east wind, but to the denseness of the atmosphere of London and the coal-smoke. See his letters, translated and edited by Madame van Muyden, pp. 197–199. So, too, Pollnitz, *Memoirs*, vol. ii. pp. 459, 460.

young adventurer had taken the precaution, as we have seen, to secure patrons among the Whigs. The name of Bubb Dodington is now a synonym for all that is vilest and most contemptible in the trade of politics, but at the time of which we are writing his few virtues were more prominent than his many vices. His literary accomplishments, his immense wealth, and his generous though not very discriminating patronage of men of letters, had deservedly given him a high place among the Mæcenases of his age. At his country seat in Dorsetshire he loved to assemble the wits and poets of the Opposition, the most distinguished of whom were Thomson and Young—the one still busy with his *Seasons*, the other slowly elaborating his brilliant Satires. For his introduction to Dodington he was, as we have seen, indebted to the English Ambassador at Paris, Horace Walpole the elder, who had, at the instigation of the Comte de Morville, written a letter recommending him to the patronage of Dodington. How fully he availed himself of these and of other influential friends is proved by the fact that when he quitted England in 1729 there was scarcely a single person of distinction, either in letters or in politics, with whom he was not personally acquainted. But his most intimate associate was an opulent English merchant who resided at Wands-

worth, and whose name was Everard Falkener. He had become acquainted with him in Paris, and had promised, should opportunity offer, to visit him in England.[1] Falkener's house he seems to have regarded as his home, and of Falkener himself he always speaks in terms of affection and gratitude. He dedicated *Zaïre* to him; he regularly corresponded with him; and to the end of his life he loved to recall the happy days spent under his good friend's hospitable roof at Wandsworth. Many years afterwards, when he wished to express his sense of the kindness he had received from King Stanislaus, he described him "as a kind of Falkener." Of Falkener few particulars have survived. We know from Voltaire that he was subsequently appointed Ambassador to Constantinople, that he held some appointment in Flanders, and that he was knighted. We gather from other sources that he became secretary to the Duke of Cumberland, and that he was one of the witnesses called on the trial of Simon Lord Lovat in 1747. To this it may be added that he became towards the end of George the Second's reign one of the Postmasters-General; that in 1747[2] he married a daughter of General Churchill; and that he died at Bath, November

[1] Goldsmith's "Life of Voltaire," *Miscell. Works*, iv. p. 20.

[2] *Gentleman's Magazine* for February 1747.

16, 1758.[1] That Voltaire should have delighted in his society is not surprising, for though we know little of Falkener's character, we know enough to understand its charm. "I am here"—so runs a passage in one of his letters, quoted by Voltaire in his remarks upon Pascal—"just as you left me, neither merrier nor sadder, nor richer nor poorer; enjoying perfect health, having everything that renders life agreeable, without love, without avarice, without ambition, and without envy; and as long as all that lasts I shall call myself a very happy man." [2]

To what extent Voltaire was acquainted with the English language on his arrival at Greenwich it is impossible to say. We can find no traces of his having been engaged in studying it before his retirement subsequent to the caning he received from the Chevalier de Rohan, at the beginning of February 1726. If this was the case, what he knew of our language was what he had been able to pick up in about three months. His progress must have been unusually rapid, for he had not only made himself understood at Greenwich Fair, but on the following day he had mingled familiarly with the company at the coffee-houses. It is, of

[1] *Gentleman's Magazine* for November 1758.

[2] *Œuvres Complètes*, Beuchot, vol. xxxviii. p. 46.

course, possible that the conversation had on these occasions been carried on in his native language. Then, as now, large numbers of French refugees had found a home in London. They had their own places of worship; they had their own coffee-houses, the principal being the "Rainbow" in Marylebone, and there was quite a colony of them at Wandsworth. Then, as now, almost all educated Englishmen were conversant with the language of Racine and Molière. Regularly as each season came round a Parisian company appeared. At Court it was the usual mode of communication. By 1728 its attainment was held to be so essential a part of education that in the October of that year a journal was started, the professed object of which was to facilitate the study of it.[1] Indeed, wherever he went he would encounter his countrymen, or Londoners who could converse with him in the language of his countrymen. In Bolingbroke's house he would probably hear little else, for Lady Bolingbroke scarcely ever ventured to express herself in English; and of Falkener's proficiency in French we have abundant proof. But among the cultivated Englishmen of that day there was one remarkable exception, and

[1] See the *Flying Post* or *Weekly Medley*, the first number of which appeared on October 8, 1728.

that was unfortunately in the case of a man with whom Voltaire was most anxious to exchange ideas. "Pope," wrote Voltaire many years afterwards, could hardly read French, and spoke not "one syllable of our language." [1] Voltaire's desire to meet Pope had no doubt been sharpened by the flattering remarks which Pope had two years before made about the *Henriade*, or, as it was then entitled, *La Ligue*. A copy of the poem had been forwarded to him from France by Bolingbroke, and to oblige Bolingbroke he had managed to spell it out. The perusal had given him, he said, a very favourable idea of the author, whom he pronounced to be "a bigot, but no heretic; one who knows authority and national sanctions without prejudice to truth and charity; in a word, one worthy of that share of friendship and intimacy with which you honour him." [2] These complimentary remarks Bolingbroke had, it seems, conveyed to Voltaire, and a correspondence appears to have ensued between the two poets, though no

[1] See Spence's *Anecdotes* (Singer, 8vo), p. 204, note, and Voltaire, *Lettres Philosophiques*, xxii.: "Ce que je sais, ainsi que tous les gens de lettres d'Angleterre, c'est que Pope, avec qui j'ai beaucoup vécu, pouvait à peine lire le français, qu'il ne parlait pas un mot de notre langage, qu'il n'a jamais écrit une lettre en français."

[2] Letter to Bolingbroke, dated April 9, 1724.

traces of that correspondence are now to be found.[1]

Of his first interview with Pope three accounts are now extant. The first is that given by Owen Ruffhead, the substance of which is repeated by Johnson in his life of Pope; the second is that given by Goldsmith, and the third is that given by Duvernet. It will be well, perhaps, to let each authority tell his own story.

"Mr. Pope," writes Owen Ruffhead, "told one of his most intimate friends that the poet Voltaire had got some recommendation to him when he came to England, and that the first time he saw him was at Twickenham, where he kept him to dinner. Mrs. Pope, a most excellent woman, was then alive, and observing that this stranger, who appeared to be entirely emaciated, had no stomach, she expressed her concern for his want of appetite, on which Voltaire gave her so indelicate and brutal an account of the occasion of his disorder, contracted in Italy, that the poor lady was obliged immediately to rise from the table. When Mr. Pope related that, his friend asked him how he could forbear ordering his servant John to thrust Voltaire head and shoulders out of his house? he replied, that there was more ignorance in this conduct than a purposed affront; that Voltaire came into England, as other foreigners do, on a prepossession

[1] See Pope's letter to Caryl, dated December 25, 1725.

that not only all religion, but all common decency of morals, was lost among us." [1]

Next comes Goldsmith—

"M. Voltaire has often told his friends that he never observed in himself such a succession of opposite passions as he experienced upon his first interview with Mr. Pope. When he first entered the room and perceived our poor, melancholy poet, naturally deformed and wasted as he was with sickness and study, he could not help regarding him with the utmost compassion ; but when Pope began to speak and to reason upon moral obligations, and dress the most delicate sentiments in the most charming diction, Voltaire's pity began to be changed into admiration, and at last even into envy. It is not uncommon with him to assert that no man ever pleased him so much in serious conversation, nor any whose sentiments mended so much upon recollection." [2]

It is difficult to reconcile these accounts with the narrative of Duvernet, who, as he almost certainly had his information from Thieriot, is an authority of great weight—

"Dans leur première entrevue ils furent fort embarrassés. Pope s'exprimait très péniblement en français, et Voltaire, n'étant point accoutumé aux

[1] *Life of Pope*, 4to, p. 156.

[2] "Life of Voltaire," *Miscellaneous Works*, vol. iv. p. 24.

sifflements de la langue anglaise, ne pouvait se faire entendre. Il se retira dans un village et ne rentra dans Londres que lorsqu'il eut acquis une grande facilité à s'exprimer en anglais." [1]

This seems by far the most probable account. It is certain that Voltaire devoted himself with great assiduity to the systematic study of English shortly after his arrival among us. He provided himself with a regular teacher, who probably assisted him not only in the composition of his letters, which he now regularly wrote in English, but in the composition of his two famous essays.[2] He obtained also an introduction to Colley Cibber, and regularly attended the theatres, following the play in a printed copy.[3]

His studies were, however, interrupted by his suddenly leaving England for France—an expedition attended with considerable peril, and conducted with the utmost secrecy. The particulars of this journey are involved in great obscurity. That he undertook it with the object of inducing the Chevalier de Rohan to give him an opportunity of avenging his wounded honour—that for some time, at least, he remained disguised

[1] *Vie de Voltaire*, p. 65.
[2] *La Voltairomanie*, pp. 46, 47.
[3] Chetwood's *History of the Stage*, p. 46.

in Paris, not venturing to have an interview with any friend or with any relative—is clear from his letter to Thieriot dated August 12, 1726,[1] and written evidently from some place of concealment in or near Paris. For some time he was doubtful, he writes, whether he would again return to England, much as he appreciated the advantages of living in a country where thought was so nobly free, where all the arts were honoured and rewarded, and where, though there were differences in rank, the only other differences recognised were those determined by merit. If, he continued, he followed inclination, he would certainly take up his abode there and devote himself to study and thought. But his health was bad and his means were small, and he doubted whether either would admit of his plunging into the excitement and hubbub of London and Whitehall. He was not, however, long in making up his mind, and "at the latter end of July" he was again in England, "very much dissatisfied" with his secret voyage into France, which had been both unsuccessful and expensive.[2] That he was at Wandsworth a month after this is proved by a letter to Mademoiselle Bessières, dated October the 15th, in which he speaks of

[1] *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. xxxiii. p. 159.

[2] See letter to Thieriot in Appendix.

himself as having been for two months in retirement.

He arrived in England in a state of abject depression, and this depression was aggravated by ill-health and the cross accidents of fortune. He had brought with him a bill of exchange of the value of "eight or nine French livres, reckoning all," and this bill—as he was not in immediate need of money—he had neglected to present. On presenting it to the man on whom it had been drawn—one D'Acosta, or, as he calls him in his letter to Thieriot, "Medina," a Jew—the man informed him that three days before he had become bankrupt, and the money was lost. Voltaire's misfortune, however, happening to reach the ears of an English gentleman, the gentleman good-naturedly sent him a sum which is not specified, but which probably relieved him from pressing embarrassment. It has been conjectured that this "gentleman" was the King, and as in the letter informing Thieriot of the fact he had said "all that is king or belongs to a king frights my republican philosophy, I won't drink the least draught of slavery in the land of liberty," it is not surprising that Voltaire was unwilling to indicate the source of this timely charity. In the Preface to the *Henriade* in the edition of Voltaire's *Œuvres Diverses,* published in

1746, it is distinctly stated that the King, hearing of the straits in which he was, sent him "deux mille écus."[1] The account which Voltaire gives of his position at this time is so interesting and vivid that it had better be described in his own words.

"I was without a penny, sick to death of a violent ague, a stranger, alone, helpless in the midst of a city wherein I was known to nobody. My Lord and my Lady Bolingbroke were in the country. I could not make bold to see our Ambassador in so wretched a condition. I had never undergone such distress. But I am born to run through all the misfortunes of life."[2]

But what affected him most was a calamity to which in this letter he does not refer, the news of the death of his sister, Madame Mignot, the wife of M. Mignot, Correcteur de la Chambre des Comptes. This threw him into an agony of grief. There is nothing in Voltaire's voluminous correspondence so touching as the letter in which his feelings on this sad occasion found vent. It was addressed to Mademoiselle Bessières, the lady who had informed him of her death. It is dated "Wandsworth, October 15, 1726." He describes himself as acquainted only with the sorrows of

[1] See *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. viii. p. 5.
[2] See letter printed in the Appendix.

life; he is dead, he says, to everything but the affection he owes to his correspondent. He refers bitterly to the "retraite ignorée" from which he writes, and he says it would have been far better, both for his relatives and himself, had death removed him instead of his sister. "Les amertumes et les souffrances"—so run his gloomy reflections—"qui en ont marqué presque tous les jours ont été souvent mon ouvrage. Je sens le peu que je vaux; mes faiblesses me font pitié et mes fautes me font horreur." On the following day he wrote in a similar strain to Madame de Bernières.

"C'était à ma sœur à vivre, et à moi à mourir; c'est une méprise de la destinée. Je suis douloureusement affligé de sa perte; vous connaissez mon cœur, vous savez que j'avais de l'amitié pour elle. Je croyais bien que se serait elle qui porterait le deuil pour moi."

He was in deep distress, too, at the cruelty and injustice with which he had been treated by his brother; and to this distress he subsequently gave passionate utterance in a letter to Thieriot.[1] But neither depression nor sorrow ever held long dominion over that buoyant and volatile spirit. On the very day on which he was

[1] See letter dated "Wandsworth, June 14, 1727," *Œuvres Complètes* (ed. 1880), vol. xxxiii. p. 172.

thus mournfully expressing himself to Madame de Bernières, he was, in another letter, dilating with enthusiasm on the beauties of Pope's poetry.

"I look upon his poem called the *Essay on Criticism* as superior to the *Art of Poetry* of Horace, and his *Rape of the Lock* is, in my opinion, above the *Lutrin* of Despréaux. I never saw so amiable an imagination, so gentle graces, so great variety, so much wit, and so refined knowledge of the world, as in this little performance." [1]

Of his movements during the autumn of 1726 we know little beyond what may be gathered or deduced from his letter to Thieriot, namely, that he was living with Falkener and his family at Wandsworth. "I lead," he writes, "an obscure and charming life . . . without going to London, and quite given over to the pleasures of indolence and of friendship. The true and generous affection of this man who soothes the bitterness of my life brings me to love you more and more." Of the liberality and kindness of Bolingbroke and Lady Bolingbroke he speaks with equal enthusiasm. "I have found their affection still the same, even increased in proportion to my unhappiness. They offered me all their money and their house; but," he adds, in the true spirit of Swift, "I refused all

[1] Letter to Thieriot, printed in Appendix.

because they are lords, and I have accepted all from Mr. Falkener because he is a single gentleman."[1] He was engaged in close study, and saw little society. He instructs his correspondents in France to direct their letters to the care of Lord Bolingbroke; but he was evidently not in regular communication with Bolingbroke, or with any member of the Twickenham circle. This is proved by the fact that he knew nothing of the serious accident by which Pope was in peril of his life (he had been overturned in a coach and nearly drowned while on his way from visiting a friend)[2] until two months after it had happened, as his letter to Pope, dated November the 16th, shows. Another letter,[3] too—a letter undated, but evidently belonging to this period and written in English—addressed to John Brinsden,[4] Bolingbroke's secretary, points to the same conclusion. On Friday, November 16, he was undoubtedly at Bolingbroke's house, for the letter addressed by him to Pope on that day is dated from Bolingbroke's. As it is very characteristic of Voltaire, it may be here inserted—

[1] See Letter to Thieriot in Appendix.

[2] See for an account of this accident, which occurred in September 1726, Johnson's *Life of Pope*, *Lives* (ed. Cunningham), vol. iii. p. 51.

[3] Preserved in Collet's *Relics of Literature*, p. 70.

[4] Printed in Appendix.

"SIR,—I hear this moment of your sad adventure. The water you fell into was not Hippocrene's water, otherwise it would have supported you; indeed, I am concerned beyond expression for the danger you have been in, and more for your wounds. Is it possible that those fingers which have written The Rape of the Lock, the Criticism, and which have so becomingly dressed Homer in an English coat, should have been so barbarously treated? Let the hand of Dennis or of your poetasters be cut off; yours is sacred. I hope, sir, you are now perfectly recovered. Really, your accident concerns me as much as all the disasters of a master ought to affect his scholar. I am sincerely, Sir, with the admiration which you deserve, Your most humble servant, VOLTAIRE.

"In my Lord Bolingbroke's house, Friday, at noon. November 16, 1726."

Very little, however, of the following year was spent in retirement, for we find traces of him in many places. His attenuated figure and eager, haggard face grew familiar to the frequenters of fashionable society. He passed three months at the seat of Lord Peterborough, where he became intimate with Swift,[1] who was a fellow-visitor.

[1] See a very interesting extract from an MS. journal kept by a Major Broome, who visited Voltaire in 1765, and who heard this and other particulars from Voltaire himself. It is printed in *Notes and Queries* (first series), vol. x. p. 403.

It appears also that he visited and received much kindness from Lord Bathurst.[1] At Bubb Dodington's mansion, at Eastbury, he met Young, who had not as yet taken orders, but was seeking fortune as a hanger-on at great houses. It was a curious chance which brought together the future author of the *Night Thoughts* and the future author of *La Pucelle ;* it was still a more curious circumstance that they should have formed a friendship which remained unbroken when the one had become the most rigid of Christian divines, and the other the most daring of anti-Christian propagandists. Many years afterwards, Young dedicated to him in very flattering terms one of the most pleasing of his minor poems—the *Sea Piece.*

At Eastbury occurred a well-known incident. A discussion had arisen as to the merits of *Paradise Lost.* Young spoke in praise of his favourite poet ; Voltaire, who had as little sympathy with Milton as he had with Æschylus and Dante, objected to the episode of Sin and Death, contending that as they were abstractions it was absurd to assign them offices proper only to concrete beings. These

[1] See Roberts' *Life of Hannah More,* vol. i. p. 399. Hannah More to her sister, sending two original letters of Voltaire's in English, given her by the Lord Chancellor Bathurst, Bathurst's second son. These I cannot trace.

objections he enforced with his usual eloquence and sarcastic wit. The parallel between the hungry monster of Milton, 'grinning horrible' its 'ghastly smile,' and the meagre form of the speaker—his thin face lighted up, as it always was in conversation, with that peculiar sardonic smile familiar to us from his portraits—was irresistible. And Young closed the argument with an epigram (I quote Herbert Croft's version)—

> "You are so witty, profligate, and thin,
> At once we think thee Milton, Death, and Sin."

It appears, however, from Young's poem, in which he plainly refers to this conversation, that he succeeded in impressing on his friendly opponent "that Milton's blindness lay not in his song."

> "On Dorset downs, when Milton's page,
> With Sin and Death, provok'd Thy rage,
> Thy rage provok'd, who sooth'd with gentle rhymes?
> Who kindly couch'd the censure's eye,
> And gave thee clearly to descry
> Sound judgment giving law to fancy strong?
> Who half-inclin'd thee to confess,
> Nor could thy modesty do less,
> That Milton's blindness lay not in his song?"

A letter written about this time to a friend in France, probably M. Dussol, dated by the editors—but dated wrongly—1726, is a sufficient proof that the young exile was no longer either

discontented or unhappy. "You, who are a perfect Briton,"—thus the letter runs—"should cross the Channel and come to us. I assure you that a man of your temper would not dislike a country where one obeys to (*sic*) the laws only, and to one's whims. Reason is free here, and walks her own way. Hypochondriacs are especially welcome. No manner of living appears strange. We have men who walk six miles a day for their health, feed upon roots, never taste flesh, wear a coat in winter thinner than your ladies do in the hottest days: all that is accounted a particular reason, but taxed with folly by nobody." [1]

In March he was present at the funeral of Sir Isaac Newton. It was a spectacle which made a profound impression on him, and he ever afterwards delighted to recall how he had once been the denizen of a country in which the first officers of the State contended for the honour of supporting the pall of a man whose sole distinction lay in intellectual eminence. How differently, he thought, would the author of the *Principia* have fared in Paris. He subsequently made the

[1] *Correspondance*, *Œuvres Complètes*, xxxiii. 163. That this is wrongly dated 1726 by the editor is certain, for in it Voltaire refers to his Essay on the Civil Wars of France published towards the end of 1727.

acquaintance of the philosopher's niece, Mrs. Conduit, and of the physician and surgeon who attended him in his last moments; from them he learned many interesting particulars. It is perhaps worth mentioning that we owe to Voltaire the famous story of the falling apple.

The history of the preservation of this anecdote is interesting, and it may be well perhaps for me to justify what I have asserted, that we owe the tradition of it to Voltaire. It is not, so far as I can discover, to be found in any publication antecedent to the *Lettres sur les Anglais*. It is not mentioned by Newton's friend Whiston in his *Sir Isaac Newton's Mathematical Philosophy more easily Demonstrated*, published in 1716. Nor is it mentioned by Fontenelle in his Eloge of Newton delivered in 1727, and inserted in the following year in the *Histoire de l'Académie des Sciences*, nor in the *Life of Sir Isaac Newton*, published in London in 1728. It is not recorded by Henry Pemberton in his *View of Newton's Philosophy*, 1708, though Pemberton does record that Newton was sitting in a garden when the first notion of his great theory occurred to him. Pemberton's words are: "The first thoughts which gave rise to his *Principia* he had when he retired from Cambridge in 1666 on account of the Plague. As

he sate alone in a garden, he fell into a speculation on the power of gravity." It would seem, too, that the story was not known to Newton's intimate friend, Dr. Stukely, for Stukely says nothing about it in his long letter to Dr. Mead (printed in Turner's Collections for the History of Grantham), written just after the philosopher's death, and containing many particulars about Newton's life and studies. But it was apparently known to Martin Folkes, then Fellow, and subsequently President of the Royal Society, and by him communicated to Robert Green, who, in his "Miscellanea Quædam Philosophica," appended to his *Principles of the Philosophy of the Expansive and Constructive Forces*, published in 1727, thus obscurely, or rather enigmatically, alludes to it (p. 972): "Quæ sententia—*i.e.*, the doctrine of gravitation—originem duxit, uti omnis, ut fertur, cognitio nostra, a Pomo; id quod accepi ab ingeniosissimo at doctissimo viro . . . Martino Folkes Armigero Regiæ vero Societatis socio meritissimo." But it was first recorded in the form in which Voltaire gives it by John Conduit, a very intimate friend of Newton, and the husband of his niece, who in 1727 drew up a number of notes containing particulars of Newton's life for the use of Fontenelle, then engaged in preparing his Eloge. Fontenelle,

however, made no use of the anecdote, and Conduit's notes remained in manuscript till 1806, when they were printed by Edmund Turner in his Collections for the History of Grantham (p. 160). Conduit's words are: "In the year 1665, when he retired to his own estate on account of the Plague, he first thought of his system of gravitation, which he did upon observing an apple fall from a tree." Voltaire's first account is in the fifteenth of the *Lettres sur les Anglais*, published in 1733, or possibly earlier, and it runs thus: "S'étant retiré en 1666 à la campagne près de Cambridge, un jour qu'il se promenait dans son jardin et qu'il voyait des fruits tomber d'un arbre, il se laissa aller à une méditation profonde sur cette pesanteur, dont tous les philosophes ont cherché si longtemps la cause en vain." Relating the anecdote afterwards in his *Eléments de la Philosophie de Newton*, part iii. chap. iii., he gives his authority: "Un jour en l'année 1666 Newton retira à la campagne, et voyant tomber des fruits d'un arbre, *à ce que m'a conté sa nièce Madame Conduit*, se laissa aller," etc. It is satisfactory, therefore, to know that the anecdote rests on the best authority, that, namely, of Newton's favourite disciple and of the niece who lived with him, as it is interesting to know that Voltaire was the first to give it to the world.

In the course of this year, 1727, Voltaire met Gay, who showed him the *Beggars' Opera* before it appeared on the stage;[1] and it was probably also in the course of this year that he paid his memorable visit to Congreve. His admiration of the most brilliant of the comic poets of the Restoration is sufficiently indicated in the *Lettres Philosophiques*, and that admiration he lost no time in personally expressing. But Congreve, whose temper was probably not improved by gout and blindness, and who was irritated perhaps by the ebullience of his young admirer, affected to regard literary distinction as a trifle. "I beg," he said, "that you will look upon me, not as an author, but as a gentleman." "If," replied Voltaire, disgusted with his foppery, "you had had the misfortune to be simply a gentleman, I should not have troubled myself to wait upon you"; and in telling the story he adds that he was very much disgusted at such an unseasonable piece of vanity (je fus très choqué de cette vanité si mal placée).[2]

To Congreve he probably owed his introduction to the Dowager Duchess of Marlborough, who not

[1] MS. letter written by a Major Broome, who visited Voltaire in 1765; printed in *Notes and Queries* (first series), vol. x. p. 403.

[2] *Lettres Philosophiques XIX.*, *Œuvres Complètes*, xxii. 161. The anecdote, though it appears in the English version of these letters published in 1733, was suppressed in the French edition of 1739.

only communicated to him some interesting particulars which he afterwards wove into his *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, and into his *History of Charles XII.*, but is said to have solicited his assistance in drawing up her Memoirs. This task he at first consented to undertake. The Duchess laid the papers before him, and issued her instructions. Finding, however, that he was to write not as unbiased historical justice required, but as her Grace's capricious prejudices dictated, he ventured to expostulate. Upon that her manner suddenly changed. Flying into a passion, she snatched the papers from him, muttering: "I thought the man had sense; but I find him, at bottom, either a fool or a philosopher." The story is told by Goldsmith; it would be interesting to know on what authority.[1]

Another story, resting, it is true, on no very satisfactory testimony, but in itself so intrinsically probable that we are inclined to believe it genuine, is related by Desnoiresterres. Voltaire, hearing that the Duchess was engaged in preparing her Memoirs for publication, ventured to ask if he might be permitted to glance at the manuscript. "You must wait a little," she said, "for I am revising it"; coolly observing that the conduct

[1] "Life of Voltaire," *Miscellaneous Works*, iv. p. 25.

of the Government had so disgusted her that she had determined to recast the character of Queen Anne, "as I have," she added, "since these creatures have been our rulers, come to love her again." Pope's Atossa was assuredly no caricature, and a better commentary on it it would be impossible to find.

Like most of his countrymen, Voltaire appears to have been greatly struck with the beauty of the English women, and about this time he became acquainted with one whose charms have been more frequently celebrated than those of any other woman of that age. Voltaire was one of the thousand adorers of Molly Lepel, then the wife of Lord Hervey. To her he addressed a copy of verses, which are interesting as being the only verses now extant composed by him in English. Their intrinsic merit is not, it must be admitted, of a high order, but as a literary curiosity they will bear repetition—

"Hervey, would you know the passion
You have kindled in my breast?
Trifling is the inclination
That by words can be express'd.

In my silence see the lover—
True love is best by silence known;
In my eyes you'll best discover
All the power of your own."

A curious fortune attended these verses. They were subsequently transcribed and addressed to a lady named Laura Harley—the wife of a London merchant—by one of her gallants, and they formed part of the evidence on which her husband grounded his claim for a divorce.[1] This has misled Mr. Parton, who supposes that Voltaire wrote them, not in honour of Lady Hervey, but in honour of poor Mr. Harley's erring wife. That they awoke no jealousy in Lord Hervey is proved by Voltaire's letter to Thieriot, dated April 1732, and by a letter he addressed to Hervey himself in 1740. But the beautiful wife of Lord Hervey was not the only lady distinguished by the admiration of Voltaire. He has spoken in rapturous terms of the graces and accomplishments of Lady Bolingbroke, for whom he finds a place in his *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, and an unpublished letter in the British Museum shows that he had paid assiduous court to Lady Sundon, who had evidently not been insensible to his flattery.[2]

And now we come to a very curious story, a story which is related in detail by Ruffhead, and

[1] This circumstance is mentioned by Châteauneuf in his *Les Divorces Anglais*, vol. i. pp. xxxv., xxxvi., "Notions Préliminaires," and is discussed by Desnoiresterres, *La Jeunesse de Voltaire*, p. 387.

[2] Brit. Mus. Add. MSS., 20,105.

has been repeated by Johnson. It had long been suspected by Pope and Bolingbroke that Voltaire was playing a double part; in other words, that he had formed a secret alliance with the Court party, and was acting as their spy. Their suspicion was soon confirmed. In February 1727 appeared the third of a series of letters in which the character and policy of Walpole were very severely handled. The letter was written with unusual energy and skill; it attracted much attention, and Walpole's friends were anxious to discover the author. While it was still the theme of conversation Voltaire came to Twickenham, and asked Pope if he could tell him who wrote it. Pope, seeing his object, and wishing to prove him, informed him in the strictest confidence that he was himself the author of it, "and," he added, "I trust to your honour as a gentleman, Mr. Voltaire, that you will communicate this secret to no living soul." The letter had really been written by Bolingbroke, and bore in truth no traces of Pope's style; but the next day every one at Court was speaking of it as Pope's composition, and Voltaire's treachery was manifest. To this Bolingbroke apparently refers in a letter to Swift (May the 18th, 1727): "I would have you insinuate that the only reason Walpole can have

to ascribe them (*i.e.*, the occasional letters just alluded to) to a particular person is the authority of one of his spies, who wriggles himself into the company of those who neither love, esteem, nor fear the Minister, that he may report, not what he hears, since no man speaks with any freedom before him, but what he guesses." Conduct so scandalous as this ought not to be lightly imputed to any man, and it would be satisfactory to know that Voltaire had either been traduced or misrepresented. It is not likely, however, that the story was invented by Warburton, from whom Ruffhead almost certainly obtained it, and there is, moreover, strong presumptive evidence in its favour. Voltaire had undoubtedly been meddling with the matter, for in a letter to Thieriot, dated May 27, 1727, he says: " Do not talk of the Occasional Writer. Do not say that it is not of my Lord Bolingbroke. Do not say that it is a wretched performance. You cannot be judge." It is certain that he twice received money from the Court; it is certain that he visited Walpole, and that he sought every opportunity to ingratiate himself with the King and with the King's friends. It is clear that neither Pope nor any member of Pope's circle had much confidence in him. Bolingbroke has, indeed, expressly declared that he believed him

capable of double-dealing and insincerity,[1] and what Bolingbroke observed in him was observed also by Young.[2] Nor was such conduct at all out of keeping with the general tenor of Voltaire's behaviour during his residence among us. That traditions little creditable to him had wide circulation is certain from Burigny's letter to the Abbé Mercier.

"M. de Saint-Hyacinthe m'a dit et répété plusieurs fois que M. de Voltaire se conduisit très-irrégulièrement en Angleterre : qu'il s'y est fait beaucoup d'ennemis, par des procédés qui n'accordaient pas avec les principes d'une morale exacte : il est même entré avec moi dans des détails que je ne rapporterai point, parce qu'ils peuvent avoir été exagérés." [3]

This may, however, have had reference not to his supposed treachery in the affair of the letters, but to the scandals immediately preceding his departure from England. Throughout his aims were purely selfish, and to attain his ends he resorted to means which no man of an honest and independent spirit would have stopped to use. It would perhaps be

[1] See his Letter to Madame de Ferriole, dated December 1725; *Lettres Historiques*, vol. iii. p. 274.

[2] Spence's *Anecdotes*, p. 285.

[3] *Histoire Posthume de Voltaire; Œuvres Complètes*, vol. i. p. 467.

unduly harsh to describe him as a parasite and a sycophant ; but it is nevertheless true that he too often figures in a character closely bordering on both. His correspondence—and his conversation no doubt resembled his correspondence—is almost sickening. His compliments are so fulsome, his flattery so exaggerated, that they might excusably be mistaken for elaborate irony. He seems to be always on his knees. There was scarcely a distinguished man then living in England who had not been the object of this nauseous homage. He pours it indiscriminately on Pope, Swift, Gay, Clarke, on half the Cabinet and on half the peerage. In a man of this character falsehood and hypocrisy are of the very essence of his composition. There is nothing, however base, to which he will not stoop ; there is no law in the code of social honour which he is not capable of violating.[1] The fact that he continued to remain on friendly terms with Pope and Bolingbroke can scarcely be alleged as a proof of his innocence, for neither Pope nor Bolingbroke would, for such an offence, have been likely to quarrel with a man in a position so peculiar as that of Voltaire. His flattery was pleasant, and his flattery,

[1] For a characteristic illustration of Voltaire's duplicity and meanness in social life, see Horace Walpole's "Short Notes of my Life," printed in *Horace Walpole's Letters* (ed. Mrs. Toynbee, vol. i.).

as they well knew, might some day be worth having. No injuries are so readily overlooked as those which affect neither men's purses nor men's vanity. Another disagreeable trait in Voltaire's social character was the gross impropriety of his conversation, even in the presence of those whose age and sex should have been sufficient protection from such annoyance. In one of his visits to Pope, his talk was, as has been already mentioned, so offensive that it absolutely drove Mrs. Pope out of the room.[1]

II

Towards the end of January 1727 he was presented at Court, as was duly recorded in the *Daily Journal* of January 27, 1727. "Last week, M. Voltaire, the famous French poet, was introduced to his Majesty, who received him very graciously." Some nine years before he had sent the King a copy of his *Œdipe*, accompanying the presentation with a poem, before which, though written in all seriousness, the irony of Pope's adaptation of Horace's Epistle to Augustus must pale.

"Toi que la France admire autant que l'Angleterre"—

so runs the ludicrous flattery—

[1] Johnson's *Life of Pope*; Ruffhead's *Life of Pope*.

"Qui de l'Europe en feu balances les destins:
Toi qui chéris la paix dans le sein de la guerre,
Et qui n'es armé du tonnerre
Que pour le bonheur des humains;
Grand roi, des rives de la Seine
J'ose te présenter ces tragiques essais.
. . . . .
Un véritable roi sait porter sa puissance
Plus loin que ses États renfermés par les mers:
Tu règnes sur l'Anglais par le droit de naissance,
Par tes vertus, sur l'univers."

That the King had made some return for the young poet's flattery seems clear from a letter written by Voltaire to Lord Stair, then our ambassador at Paris, dated 20th June 1719, and from a reference in a letter of Craggs' to Stair in the September of the same year. It seems to have taken the form of a beautiful watch;[1] possibly it may, in addition, have taken a more substantial form also. But if Voltaire took care to do what he could to ingratiate himself with the King, he was equally careful to ingratiate himself with the Prince and Princess of Wales, who presided over

[1] Both these letters are printed in Graham's *Annals and Correspondence of the First and Second Earls of Stair*, vol. ii. p. 128. "I beg you, milord, to add to all your favours by sending to my father's house the beautiful watch which you showed me. A letter will charm him, and he will be delighted if the presents which the King of England deigns to make me pass through his hands." The passage in Cragg's letter is: "I might add, that they owe us a favour of this nature for that which his Majesty did to M. Voltaire" (*ibid.*, ii. 404).

an opposition Court which might at any moment become the reigning one. Accordingly Lady Bolingbroke wrote to Mrs. Howard, afterwards Countess of Suffolk, soliciting her patronage for Voltaire, and asking her to present from him to the Princess Caroline a copy of one of his tragedies.

"Vous aimez l'esprit et le mérite et vous este plus capable d'en juger que personne. Acordé donc je vous prie vostre protection au seul poète françois que nous ayons à présent et ayez la bonté de presenter a S.A.R. madame la princesse une tragédie qu'il vient de faire imprimer, et dont il a pris la liberté de lui destiner cet exemplaire." [1]

The letter is dated Cramfort (Cranford) "ce dimanche," but neither the month nor the year is indicated. The reference to the Princess shows that it must have been written before the death of George I. For the patronage of the Princess of Wales he was indebted to Chesterfield.[2]

Nor was Mrs. Howard the only Court favourite whose patronage he sought. A letter written by him after his return to Paris in April 1729 shows that he had received much kindness from Mrs. Clayton, afterwards Lady Sundon. It is dated Paris, 18th April 1729.

[1] Brit. Mus. Add. MSS., 22,627, fol. 75.

[2] Maty's *Memoirs of Chesterfield*, vol. i. p. 42.

"MADAM,—Tho' I am out of London the favours your ladyship has honoured me with are not, nor will ever be, out of my memory. I'll remember as long as J live, that the most respectable lady who waits and is a friend of the most truly great queen in the world, has vouchsafed to protect me and receive me with kindness while J was at London. I am just now arrived at paris, and J pay my respects to your Court before I see our own. I wish, for the honour of Versailles and for the improvement of virtue and letters, we could have some Ladyes like you. You see, my wishes are unbounded; so is the respect and the gratitude J am with, Madam, Your most humble obedient servant, VOLTAIRE." [1]

On 10th June 1727, George I. died, and the opposition Court became the reigning one. Of the events immediately succeeding the King's death, the accession and coronation of George II. and the great political excitement consequent on the inauguration of a new reign, Voltaire says nothing in his correspondence. In a letter written to Thieriot a few days after the news of the King's death had arrived, he makes no reference whatever to what must have been engaging everyone's attention in London.[2]

[1] Brit. Mus. Add. MSS., 20,105.

[2] That Voltaire should apparently have known nothing about the Coronation, and taken no part in the festivities, is the more remarkable because one of his countrymen, César de Saussure, then

Meanwhile he was diligently collecting materials which were afterwards embodied in his *Lettres Philosophiques*, his *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, his *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, and his *Histoire de Charles XII.* First he investigated the history and tenets of the Quakers. With this object he sought the acquaintance of Andrew Pitt, "one of the most eminent Quakers in England, who, having traded thirty years, had the wisdom to prescribe limits to his fortune and desires, and settled in a little solitude at Hampstead."[1] And it was in this solitude at Hampstead that Voltaire visited him, dining with him twice. He attended, also, a Quakers' meeting near the Monument, and of this he has given a very amusing account. The substance of his conversation with Pitt, supplemented by his own independent study of Quaker literature, he has embodied in the article on Quakers in the *Philosophical Dictionary* and in the first four Philosophical Letters. He investigated the various religious sects into which English Protestantism had divided itself, and to these schisms he somewhat paradoxically ascribes the harmony and contentment reigning in the re-

in London, has given a very elaborate and vivid account of it. See a *Foreign View of England in the Reigns of George I. and George II.*, being the letters of De Saussure to his family, Letter X., pp. 239–270.

[1] See obituary notice of Pitt in the London *Daily Post* for April 1736.

ligious world of England. "If," he observes, "only one religion were allowed in England, the Government would very possibly become arbitrary; if there were but two, the people would cut one another's throats; but as there are such a multitude, they all live happy and in peace."[1] He studied the economy of the Established Church, and the habits and character of the clergy, whom he pronounced to be superior in morality and decency to the clergy in France.[2] Our commerce, our finance, and our government each engaged his attention, and on each he has commented with his usual superficial cleverness. Three things he observed with especial pleasure, because they contrasted so strongly with what he had been accustomed to witness in France. He found himself for the first time in his life in the midst of a free people, a people who lived unshackled save by laws which they had themselves enacted; a people who, enjoying the inestimable privilege of a free press, were, in the phrase of Tacitus, at liberty to think what they pleased and to publish what they thought. The English, he observes, are the only people upon earth who have been able to

[1] *Letters concerning the English Nation* (English version, 1733), Letter VI.

[2] *Ibid.*, Letter V.

prescribe limits to the power of kings by resisting them, and who have by a series of struggles at last established a wise Government, where the Prince is all-powerful to do good and at the same time restrained from doing evil; though these liberties, he goes on to say, have been purchased at a very high price.[1] He beheld a splendid and powerful aristocracy, not, as in Paris, standing contemptuously aloof from science and letters, but themselves not unfrequently eager candidates for literary and scientific distinction. The names of many of these noble authors he has recorded, and they are, he adds, more glorious for their works than for their titles. With not less pleasure he beheld the honourable rank assigned in English society to a class which, in the Faubourg St. Germain, was regarded with disdain. Voltaire was perhaps the first writer of eminence in Europe who had the courage to vindicate the dignity of trade. He relates with pride how, when the Earl of Oxford held the reins of Great Britain in his hands, his younger brother was a factor at Aleppo; how, when Lord Townshend was directing the councils of his Sovereign in the Painted Chamber, one of his nearest relatives was soliciting custom in a

[1] *Letters concerning the English Nation*, English version, 1733, Letter VIII.

counting-house in the City. He draws a sarcastic parallel between a "seigneur, powdered, in the tip of the mode, who knows exactly what o'clock the King rises and goes to bed, and who gives himself airs of grandeur and state at the same time that he is acting the slave in the ante-chamber of a Prime Minister," and a merchant who enriches his country, despatches orders from his counting-house to Surat and Grand Cairo, and contributes to the felicity of the world.[1]

But nothing impressed him so deeply as the homage paid, and paid by all classes, to intellectual eminence. Parts and genius were, he observed, a sure passport, not, as in France, to the barren wreath of the Academy, but to affluence and popularity. By his pen Addison had risen to one of the highest offices of the State. A few graceful poems had made the fortunes of Stepney, Prior, Gay, Parnell, Tickell, and Ambrose Philipps. By his Essays Steele had won a Commissionership of Stamps and a place in Parliament. A single comedy had made Congreve independent for life. Newton was Master of the Mint, and Locke had been a Commissioner of Appeals. He records with pride that the portrait of Walpole was to be seen only in his own closet, but that the portraits of Pope

[1] See the remarkable passage at the end of the tenth letter.

were to be seen in half the great houses in England. "Go," he says, "into Westminster Abbey, and you find that what raises the admiration of the spectator is not the mausoleums of the English Kings, but the monuments which the gratitude of the nation has erected to perpetuate the memory of those illustrious men who contributed to its glory."[1] He thought bitterly how in his own country he had seen Crébillon on the verge of perishing by hunger, and the son of Racine in the last stage of abject destitution. When, too, on his return to France, he saw the body of poor Adrienne Lecouvreur refused the last rites of religion, and buried with the burial of a dog, "because she was an actress," his thoughts wandered to the generous and large-hearted citizens who laid the coffin of Anne Oldfield beside the coffins of their kings and of their heroes.

"Ah! verrai-je toujours ma faible nation,
Incertaine en ses vœux, flétrir ce qu'elle admire;
Nos mœurs avec nos lois toujours se contredire:
Et le Français volage endormi sous l'empire
De la superstition?
Quoi! n'est-ce donc qu'en Angleterre
Que les mortels osent penser?
O rivale d'Athène, O Londres! heureuse terre!
Ainsi que les tyrans, vous avez su chasser

[1] Letter XXIII.

Les préjugés honteux qui vous livraient la guerre.
C'est là qu'on sait tout dire, et tout récompenser;
Nul art n'est méprisé, tout succès a sa gloire.
Le vainqueur de Tallard, le fils de la Victoire,
Le sublime Dryden, et le sage Addison,
Et la charmante Oldfield, et l'immortel Newton,
Ont part au temple de mémoire;
Et Lecouvreur à Londres aurait eu des tombeaux
Parmi les beaux-esprits, les rois et les héros.
Quiconque a des talents à Londres est un grand homme."
—'La Mort de Mlle. Lecouvreur." [1]

He pushed his inquiries in all directions, and surveyed us on all sides. Of the horse-races at Newmarket, at which he took care to be present, he gives a very vivid account, pausing to notice that people of quality were not ashamed either to be jockeys, or, forgetting their magnificence, to cheat like jockeys in their betting.[2] In the eleventh of the Philosophical Letters he discusses, with true philanthropic enthusiasm, the recently introduced inoculation for smallpox, praising in the highest terms Lady Mary Wortley Montague, who had the courage to try it on her own son, and Queen Caroline, who followed her example in experimenting on the young Princess of Wales.

At the end of July he obtained permission from the French Government to visit Paris, but it was on the understanding that he was not to remain

[1] *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. ix. p. 370. [2] *Ibid.*, vol. xxii. p. 23.

there for more than nine months, counting from the day of his arrival. If that time was exceeded, it was exceeded at his peril. This permission must have been re-granted in consequence of some request on the part of Voltaire; indeed, he himself speaks of having "snatched it," and his reason for asking is no doubt explained by a passage in a letter of his to Thieriot dated from Wandsworth on the 15th of June. He tells him that the *Henriade* must be printed somewhere secretly, and he asks him where it could so be printed; "it must be in France, in some country town. I question whether Rouen would be a proper place. . . . If you know any place where I may print my book with security I beseech you let me know of it, but let nobody be acquainted with the secret of my being in France"; adding, "I should be exceedingly glad of seeing you again, but I would see nobody else in the world. I would not be so much as suspected of having set my foot in your country, nor of having thought of it." He was therefore plainly intending to visit France[1] for the purpose of printing his poem, and

[1] Desnoiresterres asserts that Voltaire did not avail himself of the permission given, but remained in England, and this is certainly borne out, not only by the absence of any proof of his being away from England, but by Voltaire's own letter to Thieriot, absurdly dated by the editors 1753, properly to be dated end of 1728 or spring of 1729.

no doubt took the precaution of obtaining permission to do so from the French Government, which granted it.[1] He then, no doubt, changed his mind, and did not avail himself of the favour granted him. He had probably seen that the best place for him to print it would be London. In any case, there is no indication at all of his having left England at this time.

III

Among the Ashburnham MSS.[2] there is a curious relic of Voltaire's residence in England. It is the Commonplace Book in which he entered from time to time such things as struck him, either in his

[1] "Maurepas à Voltaire, 29 juillet 1727.—Je vous envoie la permission que le roi a bien voulu vous accorder de rester à Paris, vaquer à vos affaires pendant neuf mois. Comme ce temps est limité par le jour de votre arrivée, vous aurez soin de m'en avertir ; je ne doute pas que vous n'y teniez une conduite capable d'effacer les impressions qu'on a données contre vous à Sa Majesté, et que l'avis que je vous en donne ne vous touche assez pour y donner toute votre attention."—*Archives de la Bastille* given in Voltaire's *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. i. p. 308. In a note to Voltaire's letter to Thieriot, *Œuvres Complètes*, xxxiii. p. 173, it is stated that on the 29th July—the date of Maurepas' permit, he obtained 'une permission datée de Versailles, et signée Phélypeaux," which allowed him three months, and not nine.

[2] Barrois, 653. For permission to inspect these most curious notes, as some years ago I did, I am indebted to the courtesy and kindness of Lord Ashburnham, in whose collection they then were.

reading or in what he heard in conversation. The memoranda, which are interspersed with extracts from Italian and Latin Poets, are in English and French, and they range from traditionary witticisms of Rochester, often grossly indecent, and from equally indecorous anecdotes and verses, picked up no doubt in taverns and coffee-houses, to notes evidently intended for the dedication to *Brutus*, the *Life of Charles XII.*, and the *Lettres Philosophiques*, and to fragments of original poems and translations. They unfortunately throw no light on his personal life, beyond communicating the not very important fact that he kept a footman.

The variety and extent of Voltaire's English studies are, considering his comparatively short residence in this country and his numerous occupations during that residence, amazing. He surveyed us on all sides, and his survey was not confined to the living world before him; it extended back to the world of the past, for, as his writings prove, he was versed both in our antiquities and in our history. But the subjects which most interested him were, as was natural, philosophy and polite letters.

In philosophy two great movements were at this time passing over England: the one was in

a scientific, the other in a theological or metaphysical direction ; the one emanated from Bacon and Newton, the other from that school of deists which, originating with Herbert and Hobbes, had found its modern exponents in Tindal, Toland, Collins, and Woolston. His guides in these studies were Bolingbroke and Dr. Samuel Clarke. Of all Newton's disciples, Clarke was the most generally accomplished. In theology, in metaphysics, in natural science, in mathematics, and in pure scholarship he was almost equally distinguished. He had lived on terms of close intimacy with Newton, whose *Optics* he had translated into Latin. He was as minutely versed in the writings of Bacon and Locke as in the writings of Descartes and Leibnitz ; and of the learned controversies of his time there was scarcely one in which he had not taken a leading part. With this eminent man Voltaire first came into contact in the autumn of 1726. At that time their conversation turned principally on metaphysics. Voltaire was fascinated by the boldness of Clarke's views, and blindly followed him. In his own expressive phrase, " Clarke sautait dans l'abîme, et j'osai l'y suivre." But he soon recovered himself, and was on firm ground again. He afterwards described Clarke as absorbed so entirely in problems and calculations

that he was little more than a mere reasoning machine.[1]

His acquaintance with Clarke probably led to his acquaintance with another distinguished disciple of Newton. This was Dr. Henry Pemberton. Pemberton was then busy preparing for the press the first popular exposition of Newton's system, a work which appeared in 1728 under the title of *A View of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy*. It is clear that Voltaire had seen this work either in proof or in manuscript. For, in a letter to Thieriot, dated some months before the treatise was published, he speaks of it in a manner which implies that he had inspected it.[2] It was most likely under Pemberton's auspices that he commenced the study of the *Principia* and *Optics*, which he afterwards resumed more seriously at Cirey. That the work was of immense service to him in his Newtonian studies is certain. Indeed, his own account of the Newtonian philosophy in the *Lettres Philosophiques* and in the *Eléments de la Philosophie de Newton* is in a large measure based on Pemberton's exegesis.

From Newton, whose "Metaphysics" disgusted

[1] *Lettres Philosophiques*, vii.

[2] Letter to Thieriot, 27th May 1727; *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. xxxiii. p. 173.

him, he proceeded to Locke. Locke's "Essay" he perused and reperused with delight. It became his philosophical gospel. In his writings and in his conversation he scarcely ever refers to it except in terms of almost extravagant eulogy; and to Locke he remained loyal to the last. "For thirty years," he writes in a letter dated July 1768, "I have been persecuted by a crowd of fanatics because I said that Locke is the Hercules of metaphysics who has fixed the boundaries of the human mind." [1] Again, in the *Siècle de Louis XIV.*: "Locke seul a développé l'entendement humain, dans un livre où il n'y a que des vérités," adding happily, "et ce qui rend l'ouvrage parfait toutes ces vérités sont claires." [2] His acquaintance with Bacon was probably slight, and what he knew of his Latin works was, we suspect, what he had picked up in conversation from Bolingbroke and Clarke. No man who had read the *Novum Organum* would speak of it as Voltaire speaks of it in his Twelfth Letter. But Bacon's English writings, the *Essays*, that is to say, and the *History of Henry VII.*, he had certainly consulted. He appears also to have turned over the works of Hobbes and Cudworth.

[1] See the very interesting letter to Horace Walpole printed in the appendix to the *Historical Memoirs of the Author of the Henriade.*

[2] Chap. xxxix.

Berkeley he knew personally, and though he was, he said, willing to profess himself one of that great philosopher's admirers, he was not inclined to become one of his disciples. How carefully he had read *Alciphron* is proved by his letter to Andrew Pitt.[1] His remarks in that letter on Berkeley's treatise are so curious and acute that it may be well to give them.

"I have read out the whole book: your mind and mine do not deal in insincerity; therefore I must tell you plainly that the Doctor's sagacity has pleased more than convinced me. I admire his acute genius without assenting to him; and will profess myself one of his admirers, but not of his disciples. In short, good Sir, I believe in God, not in priests; it appears too plainly that this is a party book, rather than a religious book. The Doctor endeavours to draw his readers to himself rather than to religion. In many places he is more captious and acute than solid and judicious. I have known the man; he is certainly a learned philosopher and delicate wit. I thank you extremely again for the present."

Nor did his indefatigable curiosity rest here. He took a lively interest in natural science, and

[1] This interesting letter, written in English, is printed in Leonard Howard's *Collection of Letters*, p. 604. Howard's character was not above suspicion, but there seems no reason for questioning the genuineness of this letter, the original of which was, he says, in the hands of one of his friends.

was acquainted with several members of the Royal Society, and particularly with the venerable President, Sir Hans Sloane, to whom he presented a copy of the English Essays.[1] Of that society he was some years after elected a Fellow, an honour which he greatly appreciated.[2]

But what most engaged his attention was the controversy then raging between the opponents and the apologists of Christianity. It was now at its height. Upwards of two years had passed since Anthony Collins had published his *Discourse on the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion.* No work of that kind had made so deep an impression on the public mind. It had been denounced from the pulpit; it had elicited innumerable replies from the press. Other works of a similar kind succeeded, each in its turn aggravating the controversy. In 1727 appeared, dedicated to the Bishop of London, the first of Woolston's *Six Discourses on the Miracles of Christ,* a work which brought into the field the most distinguished ecclesiastics then living. Most probably Voltaire owed infinitely more to Bolingbroke than to all the other English deists

[1] See the copy with the autograph inscription in the British Museum.

[2] He was elected a Fellow on November 3, 1743. *Archives of the Royal Society.*

put together, but how carefully he had followed the course of this controversy is obvious from innumerable passages in his subsequent writings. Of Woolston in particular he always speaks with great respect, and he has, in an article in the *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, given a long and appreciative account of the labours of that courageous freethinker. Nor was his admiration confined to mere eulogy, for when, three years later, Woolston was imprisoned and fined for his heterodox opinions, Voltaire at once wrote off from France offering to be responsible for a third of the sum required.[1]

In the winter of 1727 he published a little volume, which is not only among the curiosities, but among the marvels of literature. The volume contained two essays. The first was entitled "An Essay upon the Civil Wars in France," the other, "An Essay upon Epic Poetry."[2] Both these essays are composed in English—not in such English as we should expect to find written by one

[1] Duvernet, *Vie de Voltaire*, p. 72.

[2] This was *An Essay upon the Civil Wars of France. Extracted from Curious Manuscripts. And also upon the Epick Poetry of the European Nations, from Homer down to Milton. By M. de Voltaire. London: Printed by Samuel Jallasson in Prujean's Court, Old Bailey, and sold by the Booksellers of London and Westminster, M.DCCXXVII.*

who had acquired the language, but in such English as would in truth have reflected no discredit on Dryden or Swift. If we remember that at the time when he accomplished this feat he had only been eighteen months in England, and that he was, as he informs us in the preface, writing in a language which he was scarcely able to follow in conversation, his achievement may be fairly pronounced to be without parallel in linguistic triumphs.[1] As the work is neither generally known nor very accessible, it may be well to transcribe a short extract from each discourse. The first essay is an historical sketch of the civil troubles in France between the accession of Francis the Second and the reconciliation of Henry the Fourth with the Church of Rome. The character and position of the Protestants are thus described—

"The Protestants began then to grow numerous, and to be conscious of their strength. The superstition, the dull, ignorant knavery of the monks, the overgrown power of Rome, men's passions for novelty, the ambition of Luther and Calvin, the policy of many princes—all these had given rise and countenance to this sect, free indeed from

[1] He told Martin Sherlock that he was never able to pronounce the English language perfectly, but that his ear was sensitively alive to the harmony of the language and the poetry.—*Letters from an English Traveller* (Letter XXV.).

superstition, but running as headlong towards anarchy as the Church of Rome towards tyranny. The Protestants had been unmercifully persecuted in France, but it is the ordinary effect of persecution to make proselytes. Their sect increased every day amidst the scaffolds and tortures. Condé, Coligni, the two brothers of Coligni, all their adherents, all who were opposed by the Guises, turned Protestants at once. They united their griefs, their vengeance, and their interests together, so that a revolution both in the State and in religion was at hand."

The second essay, which is a dissertation on Epic Poetry, and a review of the principal epic poems of antiquity and of modern Europe, is a piece not unworthy of a place beside the best of Dryden's prefaces. The remarks on Virgil, Lucan, and Tasso are admirable, and the critique on *Paradise Lost*, which is described as " the noblest work which human imagination hath ever attempted," gives us a higher idea of Voltaire's critical powers than any of his French writings. His vindication of Milton's poem against some of the objections urged against it so characteristically by the French critics, his remarks on Milton's conception and picture of the Deity, and on the grand unity of the work amid its endless variety, would indeed have done honour to Longinus. It is with something

like surprise that we find the future author of *La Pucelle* capable of criticism so delicately discriminating as the following—

"It is observable that in all other poems love is represented as a vice, in Milton only 'tis a virtue. The pictures he draws of it are naked as the persons he speaks of, and as venerable. He removes with a chaste hand the veil which covers everywhere else the enjoyments of that passion. There is softness, tenderness, and warmth without lasciviousness; the poet transports himself into that state of innocent happiness in which Adam and Eve continued for a short time. He soars not above human but above corrupt nature; and as there is no instance of such love, there is none of such poetry."

The objections he raises to the conduct of the fiction in the description of the pandemonium of the allegory of Sin and Death, of the bridge built by Death and Sin, and of the war in Heaven, show an acuteness which was probably not lost on Johnson when in his famous critique he traversed the same ground. But Voltaire holds the scales quite fairly, admitting that "there are perfections enough in Milton to atone for all his defects." It is indeed extraordinary to compare this acute and temperate criticism of Milton with the remarks on *Paradise Lost* in *Candide*,[1] though what he puts into the mouth of

[1] Chap. xxv. When he wrote the criticism on Milton in the

Pococurante is perhaps not designed to be taken seriously.

For the account of Camoens he is said to have been indebted to Colonel Martin Bladen. "I remember," says Warton in his notes on the *Dunciad*, "that Collins the poet told me that [his uncle] Bladen had given to Voltaire all that account of Camoens inserted in his Essay on the Epic Poets, and that Voltaire seemed before entirely ignorant of the name and character of Camoens."[1] Indeed, the whole treatise well deserves attentive study. The purity, vigour, and elegance of the style will be at once evident from the following extract, which is, we may add, a fair average sample—

"The greatest part of the critics have filched the rules of epic poetry from the books of Homer, according to the custom, or rather to the weakness, of men who mistake commonly the beginning of an art for the principles of the art itself, and are apt to believe that everything must be by its own nature

Siècle de Louis XIV., chap. xxiv., he had certainly cooled in his admiration of him.

[1] Warton's *Pope*, vol. v. p. 284. Though Warton has in this passage confused Martin Bladen, the translator of *Cæsar's Commentaries*, with Edmund Bladen, who was Collins' uncle, there is no reason for doubting the substantial truth of what he reports. That Colonel Martin Bladen had some special acquaintance with Spanish and Portuguese seems certain, from the fact that in 1717 he was offered the Envoyship Extraordinary to the Court of Spain, and that in his will he leaves legacies to Dr. de Arboleda and Josias Luberdo.

what it was when contrived at first. But as Homer wrote two poems of a quite different nature, and as the *Æneid* of Virgil partakes of the *Iliad* and of the *Odyssey*, the commentators were forced to establish different rules to reconcile Homer with himself, and other new rules again to make Virgil agree with Homer, just as the astronomers laboured under the necessity of adding to or taking from their systems, and of bringing in concentric and eccentric circles, as they discovered new motions in the heavens. The ignorance of the ancients was excusable, and their search after the unfathomable system of nature was to be commended, because it is certain that nature hath its own principles, unvariable and unerring, and as worthy of our search as remote from our conceptions. But it is not with the inventions of art as with the works of nature."

If Voltaire was able after a few months' residence in London to produce such prose as this, it is not too much to say that he might with time and practice have taken his place among our national classics. With the exceptions of De Lolme and Blanco White, it may be doubted whether any writer to whom English was an acquired language has achieved so perfect a mastery over it. It is, however, not improbable, and indeed very likely, that he obtained more assistance in composing these essays than his vanity would allow him to

own. The Abbé Desfontaines asserts, indeed, that the essay on Epic Poetry was composed in French, and that it was then translated into English under the superintendence of Voltaire's "maître de langue." [1] But the testimony of that mean and malignant man carries little weight, and if it had not been at least partially confirmed by Spence we should have left it unnoticed. What Spence says is this: "Voltaire consulted Dr. Young about his essay in English, and begged him to correct any gross faults he might find in it. The Doctor set very honestly to work, marked the passages most liable to censure, and when he went to explain himself about them, Voltaire could not avoid bursting out a-laughing in his face." [2] The reason of this ill-timed merriment it is not very easy to see; the anecdote is perhaps imperfectly reported. But in spite of Desfontaines and Spence, there can be no doubt that the Essays are what they pretend to be, the genuine work of Voltaire. We have only to turn to his English correspondence at this period to see that he was quite equal to their production. The little book was favourably received. In the following year a second edition was called for, a third

[1] *La Voltairomanie*, p. 46.
[2] *Anecdotes* (ed. Singer), p. 285.

followed at no long interval, and in 1731 it reached a fourth ; a Discourse on Tragedy, which is merely a translation of the French *Discours sur la Tragédie* prefixed to *Brutus*, being added. And it long held its own. Its popularity is sufficiently attested by the fact that in 1760 it was reprinted at Dublin, with a short notice, attributed, but attributed erroneously, to Swift, who had of course been long dead.

Voltaire was not the man to waste his energy on the production of a mere *tour de force*. The volume had an immediate practical object. That object was to prepare the public for the appearance of the *Henriade*, which was now receiving the finishing touches, and was almost ready for the printer. It was probably to facilitate its publication that he removed about this time (end of 1727) from Wandsworth to London, where he resided, as the superscriptions of two of his letters show, in Maiden Lane, Covent Garden, at the sign of the White Peruke. Nor is Maiden Lane the only part of London associated with Voltaire during this period. It would seem that Billiter Square is entitled to the honour of having once numbered him among its occupants. This we gather from an undated letter addressed to John Brinsden, Bolingbroke's confidential secretary,[1] in which Brinsden

[1] Preserved in Collet's *Relics of Literature*, p. 70.

is directed to address his reply to Mr. Cavalier, Belitery (*sic*) Square, by the Royal Exchange, a request which Voltaire would scarcely have made had he not been residing there. In Billiter Square, which is described by a contemporary topographer as "a very handsome, open, and airy place, with good new brick buildings," he would be within a few paces of his agents, Messrs. Simon and Benezet.

Of the many letters which were doubtless written by him at this time, some have been preserved. One is addressed to Swift, to whom he had a few months before given a letter of introduction to the Comte de Morville. He sends him a copy of the Essays, professes himself a great admirer of his writings, informs him that the *Henriade* is almost ready, and asks him to exert his interest to procure subscribers in Ireland. In another letter he solicits the patronage of the Earl of Oxford, informing him of the distinguished part which one of his ancestors plays in the *Henriade*, alluding to his own personal acquaintance with Achilles de Harley, and importuning the Earl to grant him the favour of an interview.[1] With Thieriot, on whom he relied to push the poem in France, he

[1] Unprinted letter among the manuscripts at Longleat, for a copy of which I am indebted to the kindness of the librarian.

regularly corresponded. Meanwhile popular curiosity was stimulated by successive advertisements in the newspapers, and in January 1728 an elaborate puff appeared in the columns of the leading literary periodical: "We hope every day," so runs the notice, "to see Mr. de Voltaire's *Henriade*. He has greatly raised the expectations of the curious by a beautiful Essay he lately published upon the Civil Wars of France, which is the subject of his Poem, and upon the Epic Poets, from Homer down to Milton. As this gentleman seems to be thoroughly acquainted with all the best poets, both ancient and modern, and judges so well of their beauties and faults, we have reason to hope that the *Henriade* will be a finished performance; and as he writes with uncommon elegance and force in English, though he has been but eighteen months in this country, we expect to find in his poem all that beauty and strength of which his native language is capable." [1]

All through the summer and winter of 1727 he was hard at work on the manuscript or the proofs.[2] But this was not the only task he had in hand. He was busy with his *Essai sur la Poésie Epique*, which is not, he is careful to explain, a trans-

[1] *Present State of the Republic of Letters*, vol. i. p. 88.

[2] Letter to Thieriot, dated August 1728.

lation of his English essay, but an independent work, a work of which the English essay was to be regarded as the preliminary sketch.[1] It was afterwards prefixed to the *Henriade*. A comparative study of the two will show with what skill he adapts himself, even as a critic, to the countrymen of Boileau and Racine on the one hand, and to the countrymen of Milton and Addison on the other. Meanwhile, at the end of April or at the beginning of March, he had written to the French Ambassador, the Comte de Broglie, asking him to subscribe and obtain subscriptions for the *Henriade*. But De Broglie, whose official position made caution imperative, thought that before replying he had better consult Morville. Accordingly he wrote him the following letter—

"From London, *March* 3, 1727.

"Sir,—The Sieur de Voltaire, whom you did me the honour to recommend to me, and in favour of whom you sent me letters of recommendation introducing him to the ministers of the Court, is about to print in London, by subscription, his poem on the League. He asks me to secure subscribers for him, and M. de Walpole does his very best on his part to get him as many as possible. I should greatly like to please him, but I have not seen the work, and I do not know whether

[1] See his English letter to Thieriot, dated 14th of June 1727.

the Court will approve of the additions and suppressions he has introduced into the text given to the public at Paris, and of the plates he has ordered to be sent from thence in order to adorn the same. I told him, therefore, that I could not meddle with his undertaking till I knew whether you liked it or not. I am always afraid that French authors should be tempted to make a wrongful use of the liberty they enjoy in a country like this, to write all that comes into their mind concerning religion, the Pope, the Government, or the members of it. Poets especially are wont to use such licence without caring much whether or no they cast obloquy upon what is most sacred. And if there were anything of that sort in this poem I should not like to incur the blame of having subscribed to it and recommended others to do the same. I most humbly beseech you, Sir, to be so good as to send me instructions concerning the line I must follow in this circumstance. I shall conform my conduct to what you will do me the honour to prescribe.—I have, etc.

"BROGLIE." [1]

The reply to this letter from Morville appears to be lost, but as the name of De Broglie does

[1] This letter was discovered by M. J. J. Jusserand in the Archives of the French Foreign Office, vol. ccclviii., and printed by him in his *English Essays from a French Pen*. The original is Appendix IV. of that work, the translation of which, in the body of the Essay, I have taken the liberty to borrow (p. 199). For the original, see Appendix.

not appear among the list of subscribers to the *Henriade*, it was probably thought prudent not to accede to the request.

At last the *Henriade* was ready. It was first announced, in a succession of advertisements, that it would appear in February (1728) ; it was then announced in a second succession of advertisements that it would appear in March, and in March it was published. The subscribers had at first been alarmingly slow in coming forward ; but when the day of publication arrived the names on the subscription list amounted to three hundred and forty-four ; and among the subscribers were the King, the Queen, and the heads of almost all the noble families connected with the Court. In its first form the poem had been dedicated to Louis XV. That dedication was now cancelled, and a dedication, written in flowing English, to Queen Caroline was substituted. Descartes, said the poet, had inscribed his *Principles* to the Princess Palatine Elizabeth, not because she was a princess, but because of all his readers she understood him best ; he too, without presuming to compare himself to Descartes, had ventured to lay his work at the feet of a Queen who was not only a patroness of all arts and sciences, but the best judge of them also. He reminded her that

an English Queen, the great Elizabeth, "who was in her age the glory of her sex and the pattern of sovereigns," had been the protectress of Henry IV.; And by whom, he asked, "can the memory of Henry be so well protected as by one who so much resembles Elizabeth in her personal virtues?" He promised her that she would "find in this book bold, impartial truths, morality sustained with superstition, a spirit of liberty equally abhorrent of rebellion and of tyranny, the rights of Kings always asserted, and those of mankind never laid aside."

The Queen was not insensible of the honour which had been paid her, and the fortunate poet received a substantial mark of the royal gratitude. It is not easy to determine the exact sum. Voltaire himself states it to have been two thousand crowns (*écus*), which would, supposing he means English crowns, have been equivalent to five hundred pounds sterling. Baculard says it was "six mille livres."[1] Nor was this all. The King honoured him with his intimacy, and invited him to his private supper-parties.[2] Goldsmith adds, but adds erroneously, that the Queen pre-

[1] Préface d'une édition des *Œuvres de M. de Voltaire* (Longchamp et Wagnière), vol. ii. p. 492.

[2] *Ibid.*, same page.

sented him with her portrait. A portrait of Queen Caroline Voltaire certainly possessed, but it was a medallion, and it came to him, not from the Queen herself, but through the hands of the Countess de la Lippe from the Queen of Prussia.[1] His gratitude to the hospitable country which had sheltered him, and to its sovereigns, as well as his sincere admiration of its government, found eloquent and happy expression in the poem, for all that he applies to Elizabeth, and to the England of Elizabeth, he makes as obviously applicable to his own royal patrons and to the England of their day. No Englishman, indeed, could have read such a passage as the following without feeling that the young poet had made a very handsome return for the kindness he had received from his own country's ancient and inveterate foes—

"En voyant l'Angleterre, en secret il admire
Le changement heureux de ce puissant Empire,
Où l'éternel abus de tant de sages lois
Fit longtemps le malheur et du peuple et des rois.
Sur ce sanglant théâtre où cent héros périrent
Sur ce trône glissant dont cent rois descendirent,
Une femme, à ses pieds, enchaînant les destins,
De l'éclat de son règne étonnait les humains.
C'était Elisabeth : elle dont la prudence
De l'Europe à son choix fit pencher la balance,
Et fit aimer son joug à l'Anglais indompté,
Qui ne peut ni servir, ne vivre en liberté.

[1] Voltaire, *Correspondance Générale*, 22nd July 1728.

Ses peuples sous son règne ont oublié leurs pertes ;
De leurs troupeaux féconds, leurs plaines sont couvertes,
Les guérets de leurs blés, les mers de leurs vaisseaux :
Ils sont craints sur la terre, ils sont rois sur les eaux ;
Leur flotte impérieuse, asservissant Neptune,
Des bouts de l'univers appelle la fortune :
Londres, jadis barbare, est le centre des arts,
Le magasin du monde, et le temple de Mars.
Aux murs de Westminster on voit paraître ensemble
Trois pouvoirs étonnés du nœud que les rassemble,
Les députés du peuple, et les grands et le roi,
Divisés d'intérêts, réunis par la loi ;
Tous trois membres sacrés de ce corps invincible,
Dangereux à lui-même, a ses voisins terrible ;
Heureux, lorsque le peuple, instruit dans son devoir,
Respecte, autant qu'il doit, le souverain pouvoir !
Plus heureux, lorsque qu'un roi, doux, juste et politique
Respecte, autant qu'il doit, la liberté publique ! "[1]

Nor need the sincerity of this glowing rhetoric be suspected, for what he here expresses in verse he has over and over again with equal emphasis expressed in prose.

The poem succeeded beyond his most sanguine expectation. He had certainly no reason to complain of the way in which his English friends supported him. The subscribers numbered three hundred and forty-four, many of them taking several copies ; Peterborough and Bolingbroke, for example, took each of them twenty copies, and Chesterfield ten. The list comprises almost every distinguished person in the political, social, and

[1] *La Henriade, Chant* i. *ad fin.*

literary world of those times, with the exception of Pope, whose name, strangely enough, does not appear. Every copy of the quarto impression was disposed of before the day of publication. In the octavo form three editions were exhausted in less than three weeks—"and this I attribute," he says in a letter to a friend, "entirely to the happy choice of the subject, and not to the merit of the poem itself." Owing to the carelessness of Thieriot he lost the subscription money due to him from France, but the sum realised in England was undoubtedly considerable. It has been variously estimated: Nicolardot, in his *Ménage et Finances de Voltaire*, calculates it to have been ten thousand francs; and that is the lowest computation. Baculard asserts that from the quarto edition (*édition imprimée par souscriptions*) alone the poet cleared ten thousand crowns. Perhaps we should not be far wrong if we estimated the sum, including the money received from George II., at two thousand pounds sterling. Whatever it was, it formed the nucleus of the most princely fortune ever yet amassed by a man of letters.[1] The publication

[1] Carlyle (*Life of Frederick*, vol. iii. p. 220) computes Voltaire's annual income, acquired not by his writings but by his "finance talent" during his latter years, to have been, according to the money value of the present day, about £20,000; but this seems incredible.

of the *Henriade* involved Voltaire in a very disagreeable controversy with two of his countrymen. He had out of pure kindness given permission to one Coderc, a publisher in little Newport Street, near Leicester Fields, to print an edition of the poem for his own benefit ; of this permission Coderc made an assignment to another publisher named Prévost. Accordingly in March 1728, almost immediately after the appearance of the authentic editions, appeared in the *Daily Post* an announcement of a new issue of the *Henriade.* It was printed—so it was stated—with the author's privilege, and to the advertisement a postscript was added to the effect that the poem now appeared for the first time uncastrated and in its integrity. All that Prévost had really done was to substitute six bad verses, taken from the poem in its earlier form, for six good verses in the later recension. Voltaire, justly annoyed at this audacious stratagem on the part of a piratical bookseller, at once replied by inserting a counter advertisement both in the *Daily Post* and in the *Daily Journal* : " This is to give notice that I never gave any privilege to Prévost, but I was betrayed into such kindness for one Coderc as to grant him leave of printing my book for his own benefit, provided he should sell none before mine had been delivered. It is a

thing unheard of that a bookseller dares to sell my own work in another manner than I have printed it, and call my own edition castrated. The truth of the matter is, that he has printed six bad and insignificant low lines, which were not mine, printed in a former edition of *La Ligue*, and in the room of which there are six others a great deal bolder and stronger in the *Henriade*." [1] To this Prévost replied in the columns of the same paper, defending the course he had taken, and flatly contradicting what Voltaire asserted. The two notices continued to appear in the advertisement sheet of the *Daily Post* till the end of March.[2]

There can be no doubt that this controversy was of great service in advertising the poem. It is, indeed, by no means unlikely that the whole thing was got up by Voltaire for that purpose. He certainly bore Prévost no ill-will afterwards. With Prévost, as we gather from a letter written by Voltaire to Peter des Maizeaux, which was printed, though not very correctly, in Collet's *Relics of Literature*, p. 367, he had another grievance, and, as the letter illustrates Voltaire's alertness and

[1] *Daily Post*, March 21, 1728.

[2] For the controversy, see advertisement sheets of the *Daily Post* from 21st March to 30th March, and of the *Daily Journal* of same date.

prudence in business affairs, it may be well to insert it. The original, which is undated, is among the Sloane MSS. in the British Museum.[1] I give a transcript of it—

"I hear Prévost hath a mind to bring you a second time as an evidence against me. He sais j have told you j had given him five and twenty books for 30 guineas. j remember very well, S^r, j told you at rainbow's coffee-house that j had given him twenty subscription receipts for the henriade and received 30 guineas down; but j never meant to have parted with 30 copies at three guineas each, for 31 pounds. j have agreed with him upon quite another foot; and j am not such a fool (tho' a writer) to give away all my property to a bookseller.

"Therefore j desire you to remember that j never told you of my having made so silly a bargain. j told, j own, j had £30 or some equivalent down, but j did not say 'twas all the bargain. this j insist upon and beseech you to recollect our conversation: for j am sure j never told a tale so contrary to truth, to reason, and to my interest. j hope you will not back the injustice of a bookseller who abuses you against a man of honour who is your humble servant, "VOLTAIRE."

The money realised from the sale of the *Henriade* was the more acceptable as it was sorely needed.

[1] Sloane MSS. 4288, fol. 229.

For upwards of a year Voltaire had been in straitened circumstances. To live in society was then an expensive luxury, and the expenses were greatly swelled by the fees which the servants of the aristocracy were permitted to levy on their masters' guests. At no house in London did the abuse reach a higher pitch than at Lord Chesterfield's; and Voltaire, who dined there once, was so annoyed at the imposition, that, on Chesterfield asking him to repeat his visit, he declined, sarcastically adding that his lordship's ordinary was too dear.[1] His wretched health had, moreover, necessitated medical attendance, and thus had added greatly to his expenses. As early as February 1727 we find him complaining of these difficulties to Thieriot: "Vous savez peut-être que les banqueroutes sans

[1] John Taylor's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 330; and for these monstrous impositions, see De Saussure: "If you wish to pay your respects to a nobleman, and to visit him, you must give his porter money from time to time, else his master will never be at home to you. If you take a meal with a person of rank you must give every one of the five or six footmen a coin when leaving. They will be ranged in file in the hall, and the least you can give them is one shilling each, and should you fail to do this you will be treated insolently the next time. My Lord Southwell stopped me one day in the Park, and reproached me most amicably with my having let some time pass before going to his house to take soup with him. 'In truth, my lord,' I answered, 'I am not rich enough to take soup with you often.' His lordship understood my meaning and smiled." —*Letters*, p. 194. Pollnitz complains bitterly of the same thing. —*Memoirs*, vol. ii. pp. 464, 465.

ressources que j'ai essuyées en Angleterre" (a reference, of course, to his mishap with Acosta), "le retranchement de mes rentes, la perte de mes pensions, et les dépenses que m'ont coûtées les maladies dont j'ai été accablé ici, m'ont réduit à un état bien dur." [1] He was now enabled to relieve the necessities of his unfortunate fellow-countrymen, many of whom were assisted by him when he was in London, particularly one St. Hyacinthe.[2]

When the poem was passing through the press a curious incident occurred. A proof-sheet of the first page had by some accident found its way into the hands of Theocharis Dadichi, a very distinguished modern linguist and Oriental scholar, who afterwards became his Majesty's interpreter of the Oriental languages.[3] The poem then opened, not with the simple ringing verses with which it now opens, but with a series of verses of which the first couplet may serve as a specimen—

"Je chante les combats et ce roi généreux
Qui força les Français à devenir heureux."

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[1] *Correspondance Générale*, 1727. [2] Duvernet, p. 72.

[3] Of this Dadichi, of whom Voltaire's biographers appear to know nothing beyond the name, which they mis-spell, there is an interesting account in Byrom's *Journal* (*Chetham Society*, vol. i. part i. p. 184). Byrom, who also mis-spells his name, met him in London, and was amazed at his linguistic attainments. The catalogue of his library, which was sold after his death, is in the Bodleian Library.

Dadichi, whose taste had been formed on purer models, was justly offended by this obscure and forced epigram. He made his way to Voltaire's residence, and abruptly announcing himself as the "countryman of Homer," proceeded to inform him that Homer never opened his poems with strokes of wit and enigmas. Voltaire had the good sense to take the hint given him by his eccentric visitor, and the lines were altered into the lines with which all the world is familiar.[1]

It is surprising that there should have been no notice or critique of the poem in journals then current in London; if there were, they have escaped a careful search. In 1729, however, there appeared, appended to an odd sort of literary and historical periodical called the *Herculean Labour, or the Augæan Stable*, conducted and written by one of Pope's butts, the notorious John Ozell, a translation of the first canto into rhymed heroic couplets, from Ozell's hand. But before the year was out there appeared, in an edition published by a firm in Russell Street, Covent Garden, some remarks which are, no doubt, a fair indication of the impression made by the poem on the mind of contemporary England. The writer, who writes in

[1] For this anecdote, see *Henriade*, Variantes du Chant Premier; *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. viii. p. 59.

French, begins by observing that as a rule he cares little for French poetry; it lacks energy, and it is monotonous, but in the *Henriade* he discerns qualities which he has not discerned elsewhere in the verse of Frenchmen: it is various, brilliant, and forcible. But he is, he says, at a loss to understand how a poet whose conception of the Deity is so wise and noble could have selected for his hero a character so contemptible as Henri Quatre, who was not merely a Papist, but a Papist "par lâche intérêt."[1] He is angry that Voltaire should, throughout the poem, lean so decidedly to the side of Popery; he is still more angry that he should have placed on the same footing Popery and Protestantism,—for the essence of Popery, he observes, is intolerance, and the essence of Protestantism is enlightened toleration. "You arrived in our island," he goes on to say, "with a book against our religion, and we received you with open arms; our King and our Queen presented you with money. I wonder," he continues, "how an Englishman who introduced himself to Cardinal Fleury with an attack on Popery would be likely to fare." He

[1] "*La Henriade de Mr. de Voltaire.* Seconde édition revue, corrigée et augmentée de Remarques critiques sur cet Ouvrage. A Londres chez Woodman et Lyon, dans Russel Street, Covent Garden, 1728."

concludes by hoping that Voltaire will continue to reside in England, and he exhorts him to prepare "une nouvelle édition moins Papiste de la *Henriade*." This critique purported to be the work of an English nobleman. In Paris it was generally believed, or at least circulated, that it was written by himself. It was only there, he bitterly observes, that any one could think him capable of producing such rubbish, philosophically but cynically adding: "les sots jugements et les folles opinions du vulgaire ne rendront point malheureux un homme qui a appris à supporter les malheurs réels; et qui méprise les grands peut bien mépriser les sots." [1] It was in reality the work of a French refugee named Faget, whom Voltaire described to Thieriot as an 'enthusiastic who knows neither good English nor French.' Voltaire was greatly amused at being taken for a Catholic propagandist.[2] "You will see," he writes in a letter to a friend in France,

[1] To Thieriot, 4th August 1728. *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. xxxiii. p. 181.

[2] And it is not less amusing to us to find him thus writing to Père Porée: "Surtout, mon révérend père, je vous supplie instamment de vouloir m'instruire si j'ai parlé de la religion comme je le dois; car, s'il y a sur cet article quelques expressions qui vous déplaisent ne doutez pas que je ne les corrige à la première édition que l'on pourra faire encore de mon poème. J'ambitionne votre estime, non seulement comme auteur mais comme Chrétien."—*Correspondance Générale*, Année 1728; *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. xxxiii. p. 183.

"by some annotations tacked to my book, and fathered upon an English lord, that I am here a confessor of Catholic religion." To this criticism he made no reply during his residence in England, but, on its reappearance under another title in an edition of the *Henriade* printed at The Hague, he answered it.

Meanwhile he had spared no pains to acquire colloquial English, and to converse with the vulgar in their own language, as many years afterwards he demonstrated in a curious way to Pennant, the antiquary. Pennant visited him at Ferney in 1765. Voltaire's English had grown by then a little rusty from misuse; but, says Pennant, in his attempt to speak English he satisfied us that he was a perfect master of our oaths and of our curses.[1]

It was probably during his sojourn either in Maiden Lane or in Billiter Square that his adroitness and fluent mastery over our language saved him from what might otherwise have been an unpleasant adventure. He chanced one day to be strolling along the streets, when his peculiar appearance attracted attention. A crowd collected, and some ribald fellow began with jeers and hoots to taunt him with being a Frenchman. Nothing is so easily excited as the passions of a rabble, and the

[1] *The Literary Life of the late Thomas Pennant*, p. 6.

passions of a rabble, when their victim is defenceless, rarely exhaust themselves in words. The miscreants were already preparing to pelt him with mud, and mud would no doubt have been followed with missiles of a more formidable kind, but Voltaire was equal to the crisis. Boldly confronting his assailants, he mounted on a stone which happened to be at hand, and began an oration of which the first sentence only has been preserved: "Brave Englishmen!" he cried, "am I not sufficiently unhappy in not having been born among you?" How he proceeded we know not, but his harangue was, if we are to believe Wagnière, so effective that the crowd was not merely appeased, but eager to carry him on their shoulders in triumph to his lodgings.[1] This was not the only occasion on which he experienced the rudeness with which the vulgar were in those days accustomed to treat his countrymen. He happened to be taking the air on the river, when one of the men in charge of the boat, perceiving that his passenger was a Frenchman, began to boast of the superior privileges enjoyed by English subjects; he belonged, he said, not to a land of slaves, but to a land of freemen. Warming with his theme, the fellow concluded his offensive remarks by exclaiming with an oath that

[1] Longchamp and Wagnière, vol. i. p. 23.

he would rather be a boatman on the Thames than an Archbishop in France. The sequel of the story is amusing. Within a few hours the man had been seized by a press-gang, and next day Voltaire saw him at the window of a prison with his legs manacled and his hand stretched through the bars, craving alms. "What think you now of a French Archbishop?" he cried. "Ah, sir," replied the captive, "the abominable Government have forced me away from my wife and children to serve in a King's ship, and have thrown me into prison and chained my feet for fear I should escape before the ship sails." A French gentleman who was with Voltaire at the time owned that he felt a malicious pleasure at seeing that the English, who were so fond of taunting their neighbours with servitude, were in truth quite as much slaves themselves. "But I," adds Voltaire in one of those noble reflections which so often flash across his pages, "felt a sentiment more humane: I was grieved to think that there was so little liberty on the earth." [1]

It appears from Atterbury's *Correspondence* that about the time the *Henriade* was published Voltaire had also published an Ode written in

[1] See for the whole story his Letter to M***; *Œuvres Complètes* (Beuchot), vol. xxxviii. p. 22.

English, but of that Ode, after a most careful search, I have been unable to find any trace.[1]

To this period of Voltaire's residence in England belongs a very interesting unpublished letter addressed to a Dr. Towne, then in Barbadoes. Dr. Towne was probably related to Richard Towne, a mercer at York, who was born in 1665 and died in 1746. More cannot now be recovered about him, but it is clear that he had made the acquaintance of Voltaire, to whom he appears to have sent, in conjunction with some lady, a copy of complimentary verses, apparently on the occasion of the publication of the *Henriade*. This Voltaire acknowledges as follows—

"SIR,—I have received a copy of verses which I am very far from deserving, and for fear of returning wretched prose for that poetry, I tell you in few words, I long to wait on you and the lady; in the meantime you should answer her for me. Farewell, my dear doctor. I am with all my heart, Your most humble obedient servant,

"VOLTAIRE."

The letter, which is undated, is directed to "Dr. Towne, where he is."

The next letter is of singular interest; it not

[1] See Atterbury's *Correspondence*, vol. iv. p. 114. Nichols (see his note) was equally unsuccessful.

only shows Voltaire at his best in English composition, but it throws light on his own health and condition at this date, and gives some very interesting particulars about the death of one of the most accomplished and distinguished physicians which this country has ever produced, Dr. John Freind. As Freind died on the 26th of July, this letter must either have been begun at one date and discontinued, or it must have been inadvertently misdated. Towne had, some time before this, gone to Barbadoes, and had expressed an intention of translating the *Henriade* into English. Of this translation he printed at least a portion, with which Voltaire, as we learn from a letter of Peterborough, was "mightily pleased," and of which Pope so much approved that in the event of Towne determining to publish it he offered to "look it over with the utmost care." [1] It does not appear that Towne ever completed the version, or ever published what he had done of it.

"At WANDSWORTH, *July* 23, 1728.

"DEAR SIR,—I received yesterday your kind and witty letter, which was sent to my lord Peterboro

[1] For this account of Voltaire's relations with Dr. Towne, and for these hitherto unpublished letters, preserved among his family papers, I am indebted to the great kindness of Mr. Henry Rutherford. For Peterborough's letter to Dr. Towne, *infra*, p. 111 and Appendix.

at the bath. You do me the greatest honour I could ever boast of, in bestowing an Englis dress upon my french child. I receive the best reward of all my labours if you go on in the generous design of translating my undeserving work into a language which gives life and strength to all the subjects it touches. The henriade has at least in itself a spirit of liberty which is not very common in france, the language of a free nation as yours is the only one that can vigourously express what I have but faintly drawn in my native tongue: the work will grow under your hands, worthy of the british nation, and that tree transplanted in your soil and grafted by you will bear a new and a better sort of fruit.

Miraturque novas frondes et non sua poma.

I wish I could be the happy witness of your labour. I assure you, dear Sir, I am strongely tempted of coming to barbadoes; for as the henriade wanted to be translated by you, I want a warmer climate for my health, which grows worse and worse in England. I am sure your advices would mend my constitution as well as you mend my poem; you would be my double Apollo.

Per te concordant nervis (*sic*)
et medicina tuum est.

As I am talking to you about phisic, I must acquaint you that doctor friend is a dying for having out-phisicd himself; he took the other day ten ounces of herapicra (*sic*) at once, with some sene (*sic*), and

since that noble experiment he lies speechless. This must be looked upon as self-murther. I hope you do not deal with your self so violently. I wo (*sic*) you take a better care of y^r^ health.

I hear this minute doctor friend is dead. Leaving behind him an ample fortune, and a great reputation which nothing can lessen but his late sickness; he was the only patient whom he treated so ill.

farewell, dear S^r^; in case you are ever so kind as to write to me, I desire you to direct your (*sic*) to M^r^. Cavalier, a merchant by the royal exchange.

I am for ever with sincerity, esteem, and gratitude, S^r^, y^r^ very humble, obed. faithfull serv. VOLTAIRE.

So runs in exact transcript this interesting letter.

IV

As soon as the *Henriade* was off his hands he applied himself steadily to his *History of Charles XII*. In the composition of this delightful biography, which he appears to have begun as early as 1727, he was greatly assisted by Von Fabrice. Few men then living knew more of the public and private life of the great Swede than Fabrice, and what he knew he liberally communicated. Much useful information was derived from Bolingbroke and the Dowager

Duchess of Marlborough. But Charles XII. was not the only work with which he was occupied. He began, prompted by Bolingbroke and inspired by Shakespeare and Lee, the tragedy of *Brutus*, the first act of which he sketched in English prose. We give a short specimen of the original draft, all that remains, which the reader may find it interesting to compare with the corresponding passage in the French text as it now stands. It is the speech of Brutus in the second scene of the first act—

"*Brutus*: Allege not ties: his (Tarquin's) crimes have broken them all. The gods themselves, whom he has offended, have declared against him. Which of our rights has he not trod upon? True, we have sworn to be his subjects, but we have not sworn to be his slaves. You say you've seen our Senate, in humble suppliance, pay him their vows. Even he himself has sworn to be our father, and make the people happy in his guidance. Broken from his oaths, we are let loose from ours. Since he has transgressed our laws, his the rebellion. Rome is free from guilt." [1]

[1] Goldsmith's *Miscellaneous Works*, iv. 20. As it appears in *Brutus*, Act I. Sc. II, it runs—

"N'alléguez point ces nœuds que le crime a rompus,
Ces dieux qu'il outragea, ces droits qu'il a perdus.
Nous avons fait, Arons, en lui rendant hommage,
Serment d'obéissance, et non point d'esclavage;
Et puisqu'il vous souvient d'avoir vu dans ces lieux,
Le Sénat à ses pieds, faisant pour lui des vœux,

This tragedy, which he completed on his return to Paris, he dedicated in very flattering terms to Bolingbroke. Mr. Parton, in his list of Voltaire's writings, enters among them an edition of *Brutus* published in London in 1727. Of that edition, after a careful search, I can find no trace. It was certainly unknown to Desnoiresterres, to Beuchot, and to all the editors; and—what is, I think, final—there is no mention of it in the exhaustive bibliography of Voltaire published by M. Georges Bengesco. Mr. Parton has, I suspect, been misled by an ambiguous paragraph at the end of the preface to the fourth edition of the *Essay on Epic Poetry*. Pollnitz tells us that a translation of it had, in the spring of 1733, a better run in London than the original had in Paris, adding that its author "was so entirely captivated with the freedom of thinking among the English that he had in some measure forgotten he was a Frenchman." [1]

At Wandsworth, or possibly in London, he

Songez qu'en ce lieu même, à cet autel auguste,
Devant ces mêmes dieux, il jura d'être juste.
De son peuple et de lui tel était le lien:
Il nous rend nos serments lorsqu'il trahit le sien;
Et dès qu'aux lois de Rome il ose être infidèle
Rome n'est plus sujette, et lui seul est rebelle."

[1] *Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 467.

sketched also another tragedy, a tragedy which was not, however, completed till 1734. This was *La Mort de César,* suggested, as need hardly be said, by the masterpiece of Shakespeare.[1] Meanwhile (end of 1728) he was engaged in the composition of those charming Letters which were afterwards published in English under the title of *Letters concerning the English Nation,* and in French under the title of *Lettres Philosophiques.* They were addressed to his friend Thieriot, and under Thieriot's auspices (par les soins de Thieriot) were translated into English, Thieriot having come to London for this purpose. The publication of the English translation preceded the publication of the French original; and the reason for this, as we gather from a letter written to Thieriot in July 1733, was twofold. Voltaire well knew the storm which their appearance was certain to raise in France. He wished Thieriot, therefore, in the preface to his translation, to lay stress on the fact that they were not written for the public, but were privately addressed to Thieriot himself. The reception they received in an English dress would be some indication as to how they would fare in a French dress on the Continent, and the fact that they were current in English would be

[1] See *Œuvres Complètes* (edit. 1877), vol. ii., note.

some justification for them appearing in French. Of the immense importance of these letters historically there can be no question. "*Les Lettres Anglaises*," says Lanfrey, "sont non seulement le livre du siècle où il y a le plus de vérités nouvelles, mais ces vérités y sont armées en guerre et sonnent comme les flèches inevitables du dieu à l'arc d'argent." [1] Before their appearance France had been strangely indifferent to the intellectual activity and achievement of England, knowing little or nothing about our literature, our philosophy, or our science. They initiated a new era. "Cet ouvrage," observes Condorcet, "fut parmi nous l'époque d'une révolution ; il commença à y faire naître le gout de la philosophie et de la littérature anglaise ; à nous intéresser aux mœurs, à la politique, aux connaissances commerciales de ce peuple ; à répandre sa langue parmis nous." [2] The first French editions appeared in 1734, but two editions had appeared in English during the preceding year, one printed in London, and the other in Dublin.

But the indefatigable energy of Voltaire did not exhaust itself in study and composition. It appears

[1] *L'Eglise et les Philosophes au Dix-huitième Siècle*, p. 114, and cf. his remarks on p. 113.

[2] *Vie de Voltaire ; Œuvres Complètes*, vol. i. p. 208.

from Duvernet, that he attempted to open a permanent French theatre in London, and with this object he induced a company of Parisian actors to come over; but the project met with so little encouragement that he was forced to abandon it, and the company went back almost immediately to Paris.[1]

In the midst of these multifarious pursuits he had found time to peruse almost everything of note both in our poetry and in our prose. He began with Shakespeare, whose principal dramas he studied with minute attention, analysing the structure, the characterisation, the diction. His criticisms on Shakespeare are, it is true, seldom cited except to be laughed at, but the defects of these criticisms originated neither from ignorance nor from inattention. His real opinion of Shakespeare is not to be gathered from the *Théâtres Anglais* and from the *Lettre à l'Académie*, but from the *Lettres Philosophiques* and from the admirable letter to Horace Walpole.[2] The influence of Shakespeare on Voltaire's own tragedies is very perceptible, and the extent of that influence will be at once apparent if we compare the plays produced before his visit to England with the plays produced on his return to France; if we

[1] Duvernet, p. 72.

[2] Dated Ferney, July 1768. *Correspondance Générale*, vol. xiv.

compare *Œdipe*, *Artémise*, and *Marianne* with *Brutus*, *Eriphyle*, and *Zaïre*. *Brutus* and *La Mort de César* flowed not more certainly from *Julius Cæsar* than *Zaïre* from *Othello*; reminiscences of *Hamlet* are unmistakable both in *Eriphyle* and in *Sémiramis*; while, as Professor Lounsbury has pointed out, *Macbeth* is closely recalled in the two most powerful scenes in *Mahomet*. The first three acts of *Julius Cæsar* he subsequently translated into French, and he has in the *Lettres Philosophiques* given a characteristic but not very satisfactory version of the famous soliloquy in *Hamlet*.[1] Of Chaucer, of Spenser, and of our Elizabethan writers generally it is not surprising that he was as ignorant as most English writers in those times were. Milton he studied, as his *Essay on Epic Poetry* and his article on the Epopée[2] prove, with great diligence. He had, in addition to *Paradise Lost*, read *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*, neither of which he thought of much value. He was well acquainted with the poems, the dramas, and the essays of Dryden, of whom he speaks in the *Siècle de Louis XIV*. with unbounded enthusiasm: "On distingue le célèbre Dryden, qui s'est signalé

[1] For the relation of Voltaire to Shakespeare, see the interesting Study of Professor Lounsbury, *Shakespeare and Voltaire*.

[2] *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, article "Epopée."

dans tous les genres de poésie; ses ouvrages sont pleins de détails naturels, à la fois brillants, animés, vigoureux, hardis, passionées, mérite qu'aucun poète de sa nation n'égale, et qu'aucun ancien n'a surpassé,"[1] pronouncing his genius, however, to be too exuberant and not accompanied with sufficient judgment;[2] with the writings of Dryden's contemporaries he was equally conversant. Of Garth's[3] *Dispensary* he had a high opinion, and he places it above the *Lutrin*. Even such inferior poets as Oldham, Roscommon, Dorset, Sheffield, Halifax, and Rochester had not escaped his curious eye. Rochester, indeed, he pronounced to be a poet of great genius; he puts his satires on a level with those of Boileau, and in one of the *Philosophical Letters* (the twenty-first) he turns a portion of the satire on Man into French heroics. With the poems of Denham he was greatly pleased; and of Waller, a portion of whose Elegy on the Death of Cromwell he has also translated into French verse, he speaks in terms of enthusiastic admiration, ranking him above Voiture, and observing that "his serious compositions exhibit a strength and vigour which could not have been expected from the softness

[1] *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, chap. xxxiv.
[2] Letter XVIII. of the *Lettres Philosophiques.*
[3] *Ibid.*, article "Burlesque."

and fluency of his other pieces." He read Otway, whom singularly enough he underrated, and of whose "Orphan" he has, in his *Appel à toutes les Nations*, given a sarcastic analysis. He was acquainted with Lee's tragedies, and he enjoyed the comedies of Wycherley, Vanburgh, and Congreve, on which he has left many just and interesting observations. Indeed, he did Vanburgh the honour to steal from him many of the incidents, most of the characters, and the whole of the underplot of the *Relapse*. It is singular that the French editors, who are careful to point out that *Le Comte de Boursouffle ; Comédie Bouffe* is merely a recast of *L'Echange ; Comédie en trois actes*, should have omitted to notice that both of them are simply Vanburgh's play in a French dress.

But nothing illustrates his mastery over our language and his power of entering into the spirit of our literature, even when that literature is most esoteric, so strikingly as his remarks on *Hudibras*. "I never found," he says, "so much wit in any single book as that. It is *Don Quixote* and the *Satire Ménippée* blended together." Of the opening lines he has, in the twenty-second of *Lettres Philosophiques*, given a French version, reproducing with extraordinary felicity both the metre and the spirit. With not less pleasure he perused the

poems of Prior. In the *Philosophical Dictionary* he devotes an article to him, and in another article he pauses to draw attention to the merits of *Alma*. With Parnell's *Hermit* he was so pleased that he has borrowed it, and, turning it into prose, has inserted it in *Zadig*. With the essays and poems of Addison, whom he pronounces to be the best critic as well as the best writer of his age, he was well acquainted.[1] His style, he says, is a model: "Sa manière d'écrire est un excellent modèle en tout pays." His Allegories he has imitated;[2] his *Campaign* he took as the model for *Fontenoy*; from his criticism on Milton he has borrowed; and his *Cato* he placed at the head of English tragedies, "la seule tragédie anglaise écrite avec une élégance et une noblesse continue." Indeed, he has gone so far as to say that the principal character in that drama is the "greatest that was ever brought upon any stage."[3] His observations upon the defects of the play are less open to question, and prove that if he had the bad taste to prefer Addison to Shakespeare, he was sufficiently acquainted with the history of our drama to be able

[1] For his remarks on Cato, see *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, article "Addison," where he gives a French version of Cato's soliloquy.

[2] See particularly the Vision in section ii. of the article on "Religion" in the *Philosophical Dictionary*.

[3] *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, chap. xxxiv.

to point out in what way the appearance of *Cato* marked an era in its development. To the genius of Swift he paid enthusiastic homage. He owed, he said, to Swift's writings the love he bore to the English language. He considered him immeasurably superior to Rabelais : "Monsieur Swift est Rabelais dans son bon sens, et vivant en bonne compagnie. Il n'a pas à la vérité la gaieté du premier, mais il a toute la finesse, la raison, le choix, le bon goût qui manquent à notre curé de Meudon";[1] and he was so delighted with *Gulliver's Travels* that he encouraged his friend Thieriot to undertake a translation of them into French, judiciously advising him, however, to confine his efforts to the first part. His own *Micromégas* is largely indebted to *Gulliver*, just as his *Relation de la Maladie du Jésuite Berthier* was plainly suggested by Swift's account of Partridge's death. Nor did his nice and discriminating appreciation end here. Voltaire was the first critic who drew attention to the peculiar merits of Swift's verses.[2] So Anglicised had Voltaire become in his tastes, that he actually preferred Bishop Burnet's *Memoirs* tothose of his own countrymen. "Peut-être," he observes, "ont-ils surpassé

[1] *Lettres Philosophiques*, xxii.

[2] *Ibid.*, xxii.; see, too, *Lettres à S. A. M. Le Prince*, *Mélanges*, v. 489.

leurs maîtres ; leurs sermons sont moins compassés, moins affectès, moins déclamateurs qu'en France." [1]

With the poems and tragedies of Thomson he was, as a very interesting letter to George, Lord Lyttelton, shows,[2] thoroughly conversant. " I was acquainted," so runs the letter, which is written in English, and is dated Paris, May 17, 1750 (N.S.), " with Mr. Thomson when I stayed in England. I discovered in him a great genius and a great simplicity. I liked in him the poet and the true philosopher, I mean the lover of mankind. I think that without a good stock of such a philosophy a poet is just above a fiddler who amuses our ears and cannot go to our soul. I am not surprised your nation has done more justice to Mr. Thomson's *Seasons* than to his dramatic performances." As this letter is an interesting specimen of Voltaire's composition nearly twenty years after he had left us, it may be well to cite more from it ; he is accounting for the comparative indifference with which the English public regarded Thomson's tragedies.

"There is one kind of poetry of which the judicious readers and the men of taste are the proper judges.

[1] *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, chap. xxxiv.

[2] This letter is among the archives at Hagley, and I am indebted for a copy of it to the kindness of the late Lord Lyttelton. I have since discovered, what Lord Lyttelton did not know, that it was printed in Phillimore's *Life of Lyttelton.*

There is another kind, that depends on the vulgar great or small; tragedy and comedy are of these last species; they must be suited to the turn of mind and proportioned to their taste. Your nation two hundred years since is used to a wild scene, to a crowd of tumultuous events, to an emphatical poetry mixed with low and comical expressions, to a lively representation of bloody deeds, to a kind of horror which seems often barbarous and childish, all faults which never sullied the Greek, the Roman, and the French stage. And give me leave to say that the taste of your politest countrymen differs not much in point of tragedy from the taste of the mob at bear gardens. 'Tis true we have too much of action, and the perfection of this art should consist in a due mixture of the French taste and the English energy. . . . Mr. Thomson's tragedies seem to me wisely intricated and elegantly writ. They want perhaps some fire, and it may be that his heroes are neither moving nor busy enough, but, taking him all in all, methinks he has the highest claims to the greatest esteem."

The poetry of Pope he read and re-read with an admiration which occasionally expresses itself in hyperbole. The *Essay on Criticism* he preferred both to the masterpiece of Horace and to the *Art Poétique* of Boileau; the *Rape of the Lock* he considered the best mock heroic poem in existence; and the *Essay on Man*, which appeared about five years after he had returned to France, he

describes as "the most beautiful didactic poem—the most useful—the most sublime—that has ever been written in any language." [1]

It would be interesting to trace the influence of Pope's poetry upon Voltaire's. This is not the place for such an inquiry, but it may be remarked that the *Temple du Goût* was undoubtedly suggested by the *Dunciad*, that *Le Désastre de Lisbonne* and the *Discours en vers sur l'Homme* bear the impress of the *Essay on Man*, and that *La Loi Naturelle* was certainly modelled on it.

It is easy to see that what attracted him in our poetry was not its sublimity and highest flights, not what he could find in Spenser or Shakespeare or Milton in their most inspired moments, but what he found in them when they were on the levels of life, and what he found in the writings of Dryden and his school, and this led him to a generalisation on the characteristics of our poetry as piercingly discriminating as it was profoundly and admirably true: "Nulle nation n'a traité la morale en vers avec plus d'énergie et de profondeur que la nation anglaise"; adding characteristically: "C'est là, il me semble, le plus grand mérite de ses poètes." [2]

[1] See too "Parallèle d'Horace, de Boileau, et de Pope," where he says of the Essay, "Jamais vers ne formèrent tant de grandes idées en si peu de paroles."—*Mélanges*, iii. 224. See, too, *Lettres Philosophiques*, xxii.

[2] *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, chap. xxxiv.

At the beginning of 1729 he prepared to quit England. For this to his friends he humorously assigned two reasons. He was disgusted, he said, "with a foolish people who believe in God and trust in ministers; and as he wished to believe the Gospel he was resolved to go to Constantinople, for belief in that Gospel was impossible when living among the teachers of Christianity.[1] There was now, indeed, nothing to detain him. He had published the *Henriade;* he had completed his collections for the *Lettres Philosophiques;* he had collected materials for the *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, and for the *History of Charles XII.*; he had made what friends he cared to make; he had seen all he wished to see; and, what was of equal importance to him, he had made money. But it would be doing him great injustice to suppose that the only ties which bound him to England were ties of self-interest. He had become sincerely attached to the country and to the people. He always contended that the temper and character essentially typical of the English and French were mutually corrective. "Utraque poscit opem res et conjurat amice." I believe that an Englishman who is well acquainted with France, and a Frenchman who is well acquainted with England, are both of them

[1] See Peterborough's letter to Dr. Towne printed in the Appendix.

much the better for it.[1] "Had I not been obliged," he said in a letter to Thieriot, to look after my affairs in France, depend upon it I would have spent the rest of my days in London." And again, many years afterwards, he wrote in a letter to his friend Keate: "Had I not fixed the seat of my retrèat in the free corner of Geneva, I would certainly live in the free corner of England. I have been for thirty years the disciple of your ways of thinking."[2] The kindness and hospitality which he received he never forgot, and he took every opportunity of repaying it. To be an Englishman was always a certain passport to his courteous consideration. When in 1776 Martin Sherlock visited him at Ferney, he found the old man, then in his eighty-third year, still full of his visit to England. He had had the garden laid out in the English fashion; the books with which he was surrounded were the English classics; the subject to which he persistently directed the conversation was the English nation.[3]

His departure from England is said to have been hastened by a quarrel with his bookseller,

[1] Letter to the Abbé Le Blanc, 14th November 1738. *Œuvres Complètes*, xxxv. p. 41.

[2] Voltaire to Keate, 16th January 1760; Brit. Mus. Addt. MSS., 30,991.

[3] *Letters from an English Traveller* (Letter XXIV.).

Prévost; and a story was afterwards circulated by Desfontaines that, previous to his departure, he was severely cudgelled by an infuriated member of the trade—for what reason, and under what circumstances, is not recorded.[1] However this may be, it seems clear that he had either done or said something which had made him enemies; there was certainly an impression in the minds of some that he quitted England under a cloud. In a notice of the *History of Charles XII.*, in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for May 1732, the writer asserts that "Mr. Voltaire enriched himself with our contributions, and behaved so ill that he was refused admittance into those noblemen's and gentlemen's families in which he had been received with great favour and distinction. He left England full of resentment, and wrote the King of Sweden's Life to abuse this nation and the Hanoverian family." The latter statement is, as we need scarcely say, quite untrue; the former statement is as plainly a gross exaggeration. A very disgraceful story connected with his departure from England appeared some years later in the columns of the same periodical.[2] It is there stated that

[1] See *La Voltairomanie*, p. 37; and cf. Desnoiresterres, *La Jeunesse de Voltaire*, p. 397.

[2] See a letter to the Editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol.

Peterborough, wishing to have a certain work written, had commissioned Voltaire, then his guest, to do it, and had supplied him from time to time with the money necessary to defray the expenses of publication. But these sums, instead of paying them over to the publisher, who had, on the strength of the first instalment, put a portion of the work into type, Voltaire appropriated to his own use. He then proceeded to play a double game. He told the publisher, who for want of funds had stopped the press, that Peterborough would advance nothing further till the book was out. To Peterborough, on the other hand, he accounted for the delay in publication by attributing it to the dilatoriness of the publisher. At last the publisher, justly considering that he had been treated very hardly, determined to apply to Peterborough himself. With this object he had an interview with him at Parson's Green. All was explained. The Earl, so far from being guilty of the injustice and meanness attributed to him by Voltaire, had regularly advanced the money required, as Voltaire had regularly retained it. Peterborough's rage knew no bounds. He drew his sword and rushed at his treacherous guest,

lxvii. part ii. p. 820, seqq., signed E. L. B., in the number for October 1797.

who happened to come up in the course of the interview, and it was only by a precipitate flight that Voltaire escaped mortal injury. That night he concealed himself in a neighbouring village. Next day he returned to London, and almost immediately afterwards he left England for the Continent.

This story no one would wish to believe, and there is happily strong reason for doubting its truth. In the first place, it did not appear till nearly seventy years after the supposed event. It is related by an anonymous writer, on anonymous authority, and it appears in a letter obviously animated with the most violent hostility to Voltaire. Nor is there, so far as I know, any allusion to it elsewhere. What makes it still more improbable is that, in an interesting letter written by Lord Peterborough to Dr. Towne, then in Barbadoes, which has reference to Voltaire's movements at this time, there is no mention of any such fracas or any such conduct on the part of Voltaire, but it is at the same time clear that Voltaire's flighty and uncertain temper had somewhat perplexed his friends. The letter is dated November, and was no doubt written in the November succeeding Voltaire's departure for France. "It is," says Peterborough, "as hard to account for our politics as for Mr. Voltaire's re-

solution and conduct. The country and people of England are in disgrace at present, and [he] has taken his leave of us as of a foolish people who believe in God and trust in ministers, and he is gone to Constantinople in order to believe in the Gospels, which he says it is impossible to doe, living among the teachers of Christianity." [1]

Before setting out he went down to Twickenham to have a final interview with Pope. "I am come," he said, "to bid farewell to a man who never treated me seriously from the first hour of my acquaintance with him to the present moment." To this, Pope—who as soon as Voltaire's back was turned acknowledged the justice of the remark—probably replied with evasive politeness, or with an emphatic assurance to the contrary; for it is certain that in none of Voltaire's subsequent writings are there any indications either of unfriendliness or ill-will towards him. On the contrary, his correspondence with Thieriot in 1733 has more than one affectionate reference to "Sir Homer Pope," as he speaks of him in one place, and to "glutton Pope," as he humorously describes him in another. What is certain is that, had he

[1] For this interesting letter, hitherto unpublished, which is printed in the Appendix, I am also indebted to the kindness of Mr. Henry Rutherford.

quitted Pope under the impression that he had been ill-treated by him, his vengeance would have been sure, prompt, and signal.[1]

The exact date of Voltaire's departure from England I have not been able to discover. We may, however, conjecture with some certainty that it took place during the second or third week in March 1729 (N.S.). In a letter to Thieriot, dated —but without the month—1729, he says that he hopes to be in Paris about the 15th of March. In another letter to Thieriot, dated the 10th of March 1729, he writes: "In all likelihood I shall stay at Saint-Germain, and there I intend to arrive before the 15th." On the 25th of March he was certainly in France, and probably at Saint-Germain, as he writes to Thieriot on that date: "If you can forget a few days your golden palace, your feasts, . . . come hither, you will find a homely frugal fare, a hard bed, a poor room, but here is a friend who expects you." We may perhaps deduce from the somewhat mysterious paragraph at the end of this letter, a paragraph apparently having reference to one M. Noce, really, I suspect, referring to Voltaire himself—C'est chez,

[1] The authority for all this is Owen Ruffhead (*Life of Pope*, p. 165), who almost certainly had the anecdote, which was communicated by Pope himself, from Warburton.

Chatillon, perruquier à Saint-Germain,[1] rue des *Recollets,* . . . il faut demander *Sansons*: il habite un trou de cette baraque, et il y en a un autre pour vous,—that he was living at this address under the assumed name of Sansons.

It is probable, then, that he left England between the 10th and the 23rd of March 1729 (N.S.). The time, therefore, spent by Voltaire in England was, deducting a month for his short visit to France in the summer of 1726, about two years and eight months, and not, as Carlyle and others erroneously assert, two years.

V

So ended one of the most important episodes in the literary history of the eighteenth century, the effects of which extended far beyond the limits of its relation to letters. It would not, indeed, be too much to say that what the Italian wars were to the Europe of the Renaissance, the intercourse between England and France initiated by this visit of Voltaire was to the world of the Revolution. Henceforth the barriers hitherto ex-

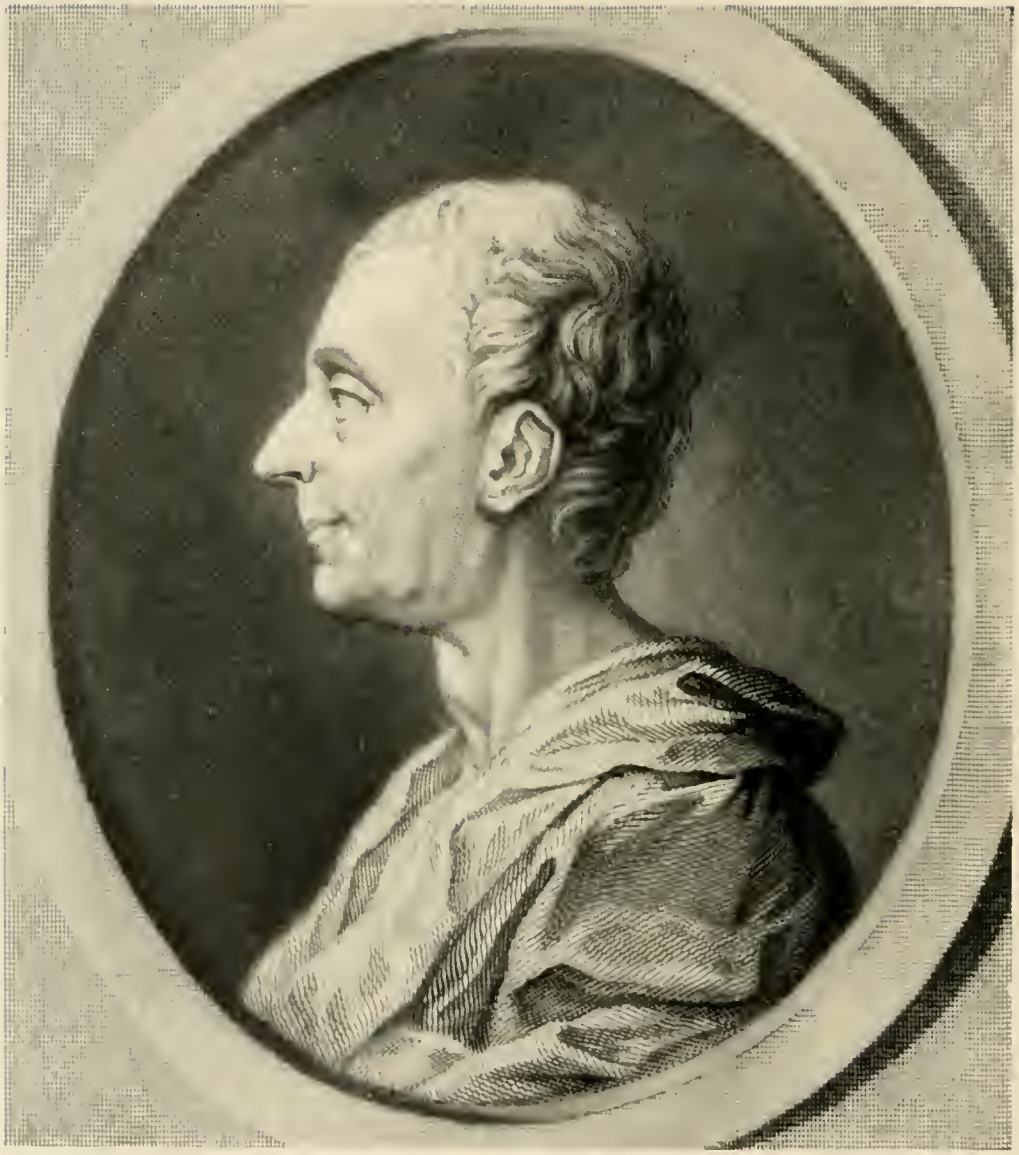
[1] In his Correspondence (vol. i. of the last edition of the *Œuvres Complètes*) there is a letter to Thieriot, dated from Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 2nd March 1729, a date which, as the letter of 10th March proves, is certainly erroneous.

isting between the intellectual activity of England and France were removed, and a highroad was opened along which streamed the forces which transformed the France of the old regime into the France of the nineteenth century. In less than seventy years afterwards that regime was in ashes, and not a torch fired the pyre which had not been lighted in England. To the receptive and plastic genius of Voltaire, which at once absorbed and assimilated all that had been achieved here in politics, in philosophy, in letters, and in science, and which henceforth took the ply from its new masters and its new teachers, must be assigned the first place among these agencies. It was he who interpreted to Europe what had placed England in the van of progressive humanity,—her noble constitution, her enlightened philanthropy, and, above all, her realisation of what in other countries was little more than the dream of enthusiasts,—the equality of every citizen in the eyes of the law, and the right of every citizen to think what he pleased and to speak what he thought. Among the inestimable blessings secured by the Revolution of 1688 were, in addition to those Acts which transformed a despotic into a limited monarchy, the Toleration Act, which, however guarded and grudging in what it actually conceded, was yet an

emphatic expression of principles everywhere at work, the purification of the administration of justice and the freedom of the Press. It was just at the time when the effects of all this had made England present so striking a contrast, both politically and intellectually, to France and to the other great States of Europe, that Voltaire visited us. What he saw kindled in him not merely intellectual admiration, but true moral enthusiasm, as we need go no further than the noble dedication of *Zaïre* to see. It was here that he learnt to realise what, in spite of abuses, constitutes the real dignity of man, here that he received his initiation in that large philanthropy, that enlightened tolerance, and those cosmopolitan sympathies and interests which ever afterwards distinguished him. And when, many years afterwards, he wrote—

> "Le soleil des Anglais, c'est le feu du génie,
> C'est l'amour de la gloire et de l'humanité,
> Celui de la patrie et de la liberté,"

he did but express with a sincerity and fervour which time never impaired, both his passionate admiration for a country much dearer to him than his own, and the grounds and reasons for that generous preference.



Baron de Montesquieu.

MONTESQUIEU IN ENGLAND

I

THE year which witnessed the departure of Voltaire from our shores witnessed the advent of another of his illustrious countrymen. Voltaire's memorable visit came to a close in the spring of 1729; in the following autumn arrived Montesquieu. The abundant material which throws light on Voltaire's movements and experiences while he was among us is unfortunately not available in the case of Montesquieu. By a singular fatality, or rather series of fatalities, almost all those documents which would have enabled us to trace his career during this interesting part of his life have been destroyed or mislaid. We know from Maty [1] that he regularly corresponded with Chesterfield—who was his host during a portion at least of his visit—and Chesterfield with him; but of the letters which passed between them not one has been preserved.

[1] "Memoirs of Chesterfield," sect. ii. in Chesterfield's *Miscellaneous Works*, vol. i. p. 42.

I am enabled by the courtesy of the late Sir Robert Herbert to state that, though there are many memoranda among the Chesterfield papers bearing on the period of Montesquieu's visit, a careful search, most kindly made at my request, has revealed nothing which has any reference to him.

It is all but certain that he recorded as fully and carefully his impressions of England and of the English as he did of the other countries which he visited in the course of his travels; but such records are represented only by the *Notes sur l'Angleterre*, first published in 1818, which are so meagre and trivial that they have all the appearance of being garbled and mutilated.[1] To the history of his manuscripts I shall presently recur, but I may here remark in passing, that if I have been correctly informed, his grandson, Charles Louis, who settled, became naturalised, married, and passed some thirty-four years of his life in England, dying at his seat, Bridge Hill House, near Canterbury, in 1824,[2] deliberately destroyed the

[1] They are printed in Montesquieu's works (edit. Laboulaye), vol. vii. pp. 183–196.

[2] It is curious that there should be no monument and no record of the Baron de Montesquieu in Bridge Church, and yet we know from the *Times*, 31st July 1824, and from the Church Register, that he was buried there. "On Tuesday the remains of the Baron de Montesquieu, of Bridge Hill House, were deposited in Bridge

missing commentaries. He was grateful to England for the asylum which she had afforded him during his exile, and had become much attached to his adopted country. Such notes as have been preserved sufficiently indicate the probable tendency of the fuller commentaries, for nothing could be more offensively anti-English than these jottings. And that Montesquieu's grandson, from considerations of courtesy and gratitude, should have wished a more elaborate expression of such sentiments to be suppressed is not surprising. Enough, however, may be gathered from various sources to sketch, at least in outline, this important episode in the history of the literary relations between England and France.

I am sorry to begin, as I am obliged to begin, by finding fault with the only attempt which has, as yet, been made to throw light on this passage in Montesquieu's biography. The chapter in M. Vian's *Histoire de Montesquieu* dealing with the visit to England is the most unsatisfactory part of his work; it is jejune and superficial, and is, moreover, full of errors and misrepresentations, and that not in trifles but in matters of capital

Church. The Baron was an hereditary Marshal of France, and descendant of the illustrious Montesquieu. Napoleon restored his paternal estates, which had been confiscated during the French Revolution, from a regard to the memory of his ancestor."

importance. A few of these may be specified. Montesquieu did not travel with Chesterfield in Italy, as M. Vian states; he did not even meet him there, for Chesterfield was then in residence as Ambassador at The Hague. Nor is there any evidence that he met Chesterfield at the Club de l'Entresol in Paris.[1] He met him, as he himself tells us, for the first time at The Hague, with a letter of introduction from Lord Waldegrave.[2] There is no evidence that he stayed with Chesterfield during the whole of his visit to England; and indeed this is impossible, for Chesterfield was then only occasionally in England. There is no evidence that Montesquieu left England in April 1731; and to support this, as well as the assertion that he resided with Chesterfield, M. Vian has recourse to an expedient which cannot be sufficiently reprehended. He quotes a letter of Fontenelle's, which he describes as dated 1731, and as being addressed to Lord Chesterfield's house; we turn to the letter, and find that it has no date and no address.[3] In M. Vian's account of Montesquieu's introduction to the Queen, and of

[1] Vian, p. 115, and this is reasserted by M. Zévort. See his *Montesquieu*, pp. 130, 131.

[2] *Voyages*, ii. 235.

[3] See *Œuvres de Fontenelle* (Paris, 1818), vol. ii. p. 566. The letter does not appear at all in the edition cited by M. Vian, Paris, 1758.

his conversation with her at Kensington in 1730, we are actually informed that the Queen was Queen Charlotte! Nor does M. Vian add anything to our knowledge of this episode in Montesquieu's life beyond what may be gathered from perfectly obvious sources.

It is scarcely necessary to say that Charles Louis de Secondat, Baron de la Brède, afterwards Baron de Montesquieu, sprang from a family long distinguished by its soldiers and its lawyers, and was born at La Brède, about three leagues from Bordeaux, on 18th January 1689: his father being Jacques de Secondat, second son of the Baron de Montesquieu; his mother, Françoise de Penel, who brought her husband the castle and estates of La Brède. He received his early education at the hands of the Oratorians at Juilly, and at Juilly he remained from his twelfth to his twenty-second year. He then went through a course of legal study, and was entered as Counsellor in the Parliament of Bordeaux in 1714. In the following year he married Mademoiselle Jeanne de Lartigue, and about two years afterwards became *Président à mortier;* his uncle, the head of the family, who held this office, having bequeathed it to him, together with all his property, on condition that he would take the title of Montesquieu. The condition and

the responsibilities were accepted by him, but his heart was neither in his work nor in his home. His wife was plain and homely; his official duties were dry and most distasteful to him; but he neglected neither. If in private life, as a husband and father, and in public life, as a magistrate and citizen, he reduced his responsibilities to a minimum, he decorously and punctually discharged them. The rest of his time he gave to congenial friends wherever he could find them—and he sought them assiduously among the choice spirits of his age,—to his studies, to his liaisons, and to ambition. In his temperament there was a singular mixture of the philosopher and of the libertine, of austerity and of voluptuousness. In the *Lettres Persanes* we find these characteristics blended; in the *Temple de Gnide,* and in the *Considérations sur la Grandeur et Décadence des Romains,* in remarkable and curious contrast; in the *Esprit des Lois* occasionally discernible.

Montesquieu's attention was at first directed to anatomy, botany, and natural history. But he was of Gascon descent, and the Gascon strain in him soon led to less positive studies; and he fell under the fascination of Montaigne, with whom constitutionally he had so much in common. Indeed, in the admirable portrait which he has given of

himself in his *Pensées Diverses* he might be describing his master.

"L'étude," writes this happy man, "a été pour moi le souverain remède contre les dégoûts de la vie, n'ayant jamais eu de chagrin qu'une heure de lecture n'ait dissipé. . . . Je suis presque aussi content avec des sots qu'avec des gens d'esprit ; car il y a peu d'hommes si ennuyeux qui ne m'aient amusé. . . . J'ai eu naturellement de l'amour pour le bien et l'honneur de ma patrie, et peu pour ce qu'on appelle la gloire. Quand j'ai voyagé dans les pays étrangers, je m'y suis attaché comme au mien propre, j'ai pris part à leur fortune et j'aurois souhaité qu'ils fussent dans un état florissant." [1]

His thirst for knowledge, for all that could be gathered from books, from observation and experience, grew insatiable. He revelled in the Latin classics ; he devoured history and political philosophy ; he explored the ancient philosophies, being particularly attracted by Stoicism ; and, as the fruit of these studies, he produced for the Academy at Bordeaux two essays, entitled respectively *La Politique des Romains dans la Religion* and *Le Système des Idées*. Fiction and *belles-lettres* were the recreation of his lighter moments ; *Télémaque*

[1] *Œuvres* (edit. Laboulaye), vol. vii. p. 151.

he pronounced to be a divine work; and in *The Thousand-and-one-Nights*, he tells us, he absolutely revelled. But what chiefly interested him and soon formed the centre of his studies was man, not regarded psychologically so much as in relation to politics and society. Of manners, of character, of all in which human nature reveals itself, he was an acute and unwearied observer. With him, though he had as much delight within the walls of a library as Goethe's Wagner, the world of books was but the vestibule to the world of active life; in no writer were the instincts of the scholar and recluse more happily tempered with the instincts of the philosopher, the philanthropist, and the critic of society and manners.

All this found expression, before he had completed his thirty-third year, in a work which has long lost its vogue, but which will find delighted readers as long as the French language exists. The scheme of the *Lettres Persanes* was suggested partly by Dufresny and partly by Chardin's Persian travels; but what constitutes the vitality, the power, the charm of these brilliant sketches and studies belongs solely to Montesquieu. There can be little doubt that the twin brothers Usbec and Rica were, as M. Sorel has observed, drawn from Montesquieu himself; the one is Montesquieu the

philosopher, the other is Montesquieu the painter of manners and satirist. The work is a masterly picture, and an equally masterly analysis of the world of which Saint-Simon was the historian and Dubois the type; of a world of libertines and harlots, of fribbles and sycophants, without religion, without heart, and without hope.

But Montesquieu is neither a Tacitus nor a Knox; on his brow is no scowl, in his mouth no jeremiad. To the *dulcia vitia* of that corrupt time he may certainly be described as pandering. Nothing, in truth, could be more grossly licentious than many passages in these letters. His social sketches are admirable; his satire, though not without touches as severe and poignant as anything in Le Sage and La Bruyère, is the perfection of urbane and delicate mockery. But when he scans society with the eye of a political philosopher he assumes quite a different tone; and there are many passages which read like extracts from the *Esprit des Lois*, the germ of which is indeed to be found in them. Of all his writings these letters most comprehensively illustrate his genius and temper; and of all his writings they were, and always have been, the most popular.

The *Lettres* could not, of course, be published in France, or appear with the author's name. A

sagacious friend, indeed, attempted to dissuade him from giving them to the world at all, adding, however, that if published they would "sell like bread." To escape proscription, they were, like Pascal's *Provinciales*, printed at Rouen, and published at Amsterdam. Within a year they had run through four editions and four pirated reprints. Montesquieu has himself told us how the publishers went about "plucking men of letters by the sleeves" and saying, "Write me, Sir, some Persian Letters." Their authorship was soon an open secret; and Montesquieu at once tasted all the sweets of fame. A nobleman as well as an author, he soon counted among his friends the great men and the great ladies who were the flower of Parisian society — the Comte de Caylus, Maurepas, the Chevalier d'Aydies, Madame de Lambert, Madame de Tencin, Madame du Deffand. At Chantilly he was the guest of the Duc de Bourbon, whose sister, Mademoiselle de Clermont, is said to have inspired the *Temple de Gnide*. This work, in which, as in *Arsace et Isménie* Montesquieu gave the reins to the voluptuous fancies in which, in the *Persian Letters*, he had only occasionally indulged, was published at Paris in 1725. It does him little honour even as an artist, and might, without loss, have gone the way of the various *bonnes fortunes*

which, according to the Abbé de Voisenon, it brought him.

He was now, in spite of his sarcastic picture of the Academy in the seventy-third Persian Letter, anxious for the honour to which every savant and man of letters with any title to distinction aspired. A member of that body having just died, Montesquieu became a candidate for the vacant place, and was elected. But the author of the *Persian Letters*, if he had many powerful friends, had many equally powerful enemies, who gained the ear of Louis XV. The King, thus prejudiced against him, refused to confirm the election, on the ground that Montesquieu did not reside in Paris ; and Montesquieu returned in pique to Bordeaux. Two years afterwards, having disposed of his Presidentship and settled in Paris, he again presented himself. This time he had the support of the director, Maréschal d'Estrées, who at last succeeded in gaining over Fleury ; and the coveted honour was conferred on him in January 1728. His *discours*, which was unusually brief, disappointed everyone. The truth was that courtesy and decorum compelled him to say much that was against his conscience ; panegyrics on Richelieu and Louis XIV. were strange things to come from the lips of the author of the thirty-seventh Persian

Letter; and he felt, no doubt, the humiliation of having to pronounce them.

He now began to prepare himself seriously for the composition of the *Esprit des Lois*, the first sketches of which he appears to have begun after his return from Paris to Bordeaux. Accordingly, he determined to investigate the constitutions and characteristics of all the chief countries in Europe, and to collect by personal observation and inquiry the materials necessary for his work. Setting out from Paris with Lord Waldegrave, he first visited Germany and Austria. In Vienna he was received by Prince Eugene, and seriously thought of abandoning his literary pursuits and adopting diplomacy as a profession. That, however, was not to be. He next visited Hungary, and from Hungary he passed to Italy. In the spring of 1729 he left Italy, and spent the greater part of that year in Switzerland, in the Rhine country, and in Holland. At The Hague he made the acquaintance of Lord Chesterfield,[1] to whom Waldegrave had given him a letter of introduction, and in October sailed with him in his yacht to England.

Of his experiences in these countries he made full and elaborate notes, the most voluminous and valuable being the records of his journeys in Italy,

[1] "Voyage en Hollande"; *Voyages*, vol. ii. p. 235.

Germany, and Holland. These have been preserved in their entirety. Of his notes on Austria and Hungary we have only fragments; and that seems to be the case also with the notes on England. Till 1894, these records, with the exception of the jottings on England, remained in manuscript; but between that year and 1896 the late Baron Albert de Montesquieu, with the assistance of M. Céleste, published them. The history of the Montesquieu manuscripts, of which these records form only a portion, is so interesting that it well deserves a digression.

When Montesquieu died in 1755, his son, Jean Baptiste, inherited his manuscripts. A year or two afterwards an elaborate edition of Montesquieu's works was prepared by Richer for the press, and Jean Baptiste was asked to allow the unpublished papers to be included in it. But he was by no means sure that their publication would be judicious, so he consulted a friend, one Latapie, in whose judgment he had great confidence. Latapie was opposed to their publication, very sensibly observing, and gladly do I transcribe his words—

"tout ce qui intéresse des amis n'intéresse pas également le public, toujours très sévère sur ce qu'on lui présente d'un homme célèbre, parce

qu'il le juge d'après lui-même, d'après le point de perfection où il a porté ses premiers ouvrages"

—an observation which, especially in these days when officious friends or stupid editors are so mischievously active, might often with advantage be remembered. In accordance with this advice, Jean Baptiste refused his consent to the publication of the manuscripts; and Richer's edition, which appeared in 1758, appeared without them. Their suppression was greatly regretted by Montesquieu's many admirers; and, some years later, Jean Baptiste was most absurdly taunted with having withheld them because he was jealous of his father's reputation, he himself being a candidate for fame on the strength of certain unimportant contributions to natural history. However, in 1783 he gave to the world one of the unpublished papers, *Arsace et Isménie*, and, having done so, turned the key on the rest.

Jean Baptiste died in 1795, and the manuscripts passed into the hands of his son, Charles Louis, whose property was confiscated after the Reign of Terror, he himself having emigrated to England. In 1795 another edition of Montesquieu's works was in preparation, and again the publisher desired to include the manuscripts. Accordingly he wrote to one Darcet, who had in his youth been tutor

to Jean Baptiste, and was acquainted with Latapie, asking him to communicate with Latapie. Latapie stated in reply that the manuscripts could not be found; that Jean Baptiste had fled during the Terror, taking them with him; and that his widow did not know where they were deposited. All that Latapie could do, he said, was to give from memory a list of the pieces; and this he did very accurately, as afterwards appeared. Meanwhile it turned out that the manuscripts were in the possession of one Joachim Laîné and his brother Honorat, to whom Jean Baptiste had entrusted them before his death in 1793. The Laînés transmitted them to Charles Louis after his "radiation de la liste des émigrés," and the restoration of his property in 1801. By him they were deposited somewhere in London, where they remained for some years after the Baron's death. At last, on an application being made for them by the Prefect of the Gironde in the name of the representatives of Montesquieu's family, the descendants of his daughter—for the male branch had become extinct—they were returned to La Brède.

But the history of their strange vicissitudes was not yet ended. Laîné expressed a desire to edit them, and many of them were sent to him for that purpose; but he died without carrying out his

intention. Then one Aimé Martin, with the assistance of Honorat Laîné, took up the work ; but both died without making any way in it, and without returning the papers to La Brède. On their recovery it was found that some of them were missing. The Baron de Montesquieu now determined that they should never again leave La Brède, and continued for many years to turn a deaf ear to all applications even to inspect them.

At last it was determined that they should see the light. In 1891 two tracts were printed ; in the following year appeared a still more interesting instalment, edited by the Baron de Montesquieu himself, *Mélanges Inédits*. Next appeared the *Voyages ;* and the rest of the manuscripts are now in course of publication. Montesquieu's fame is not likely to gain by anything which appears in these papers, and many pieces were certainly not worth printing. Indeed, if we except the *Voyages*—which are of interest for reasons quite unconnected with literary merit, of which they have very little —we are by no means sure that Latapie's original advice was not after all the best.

II

But to turn from Montesquieu's manuscripts to Montesquieu himself. It does not appear that he

had prepared himself for his visit to England by acquiring the language; but that he had studied English history with care is clear from the hundred-and-fourth Persian Letter. To English society he had the best of introductions, for his sponsors were the Earls of Waldegrave and Chesterfield. No man was more respected and popular in diplomatic and fashionable circles than Waldegrave, who was grandson on his mother's side of James II. and Arabella Churchill, and nephew of Marshal Berwick. With Berwick, whose acquaintance he had made in 1716, when Berwick was commandant in Guienne, Montesquieu was on intimate terms; and it is not unlikely that his intimacy with the uncle led to his intimacy with the nephew. Waldegrave was at this time Minister-Plenipotentiary at Vienna, but had been called to Paris as one of the representatives of England at the Congress of Soissons. At Paris, Montesquieu met him, and the two men soon became great friends.

Waldegrave was in a delicate and most difficult position, in which it is quite possible that Montesquieu may indirectly have been of service to him. He had been instructed to watch Berwick and the Jacobite leaders, who, with Chauvelin, were doing all in their power to exasperate Fleury against England, and to thwart the negotiations preliminary to the

Treaty of Seville. On Montesquieu's return from his travels Waldegrave presented him to George II. at Hanover ; and shortly afterwards he did him another and more useful service by introducing him to Chesterfield. Chesterfield had, about a year and a half before, been appointed Ambassador at the Hague, and was at this time residing there in that capacity. Montesquieu arrived at The Hague about the middle of October 1729. The author of the *Persian Letters* and the friend of Madame du Deffand and of the Duc de Bourbon had no doubt little need to present the letter of introduction with which Waldegrave had furnished him. Chesterfield received him most graciously, and, on hearing that he was on his way to England, told him that he was about to leave for England himself, and offered him a place in his yacht. Montesquieu gladly accepted the offer, and the two friends—for cordial friends they had become during the voyage—arrived in London on Thursday morning, October 23, 1729.[1]

[1] *Universal Spectator* for Saturday, 25th October 1729: "Thursday morning the Right Honourable the Earl of Chesterfield arrived here from The Hague." It is strange that Montesquieu in his *Notes sur l'Angleterre* should say that he left The Hague on the last day of October. "Je partis le dernier octobre 1729 de la Haye." *Notes sur l'Angleterre.* The newspaper is hardly likely to be in error.

He found himself, he writes to his friend Father Cerati, in a country which bore very little resemblance to any other in Europe. He was by no means favourably impressed by London. The streets, he complains, were quite frightful, so badly paved and so full of holes and ruts that it was almost impossible for a carriage to make its way along them; and the carriages were as frightful as the streets.[1] The passenger, he says, on scrambling into them, found himself seated on an elevation as high as a theatre; but, high as this was, over him towered the coachman and the luggage. In peril alike from what was above and from what was below, the unhappy traveller was indeed to be pitied if he had not made his will.[2] The houses which overhung the streets he thought grim and ugly; and, with a few exceptions, he saw nothing to admire in the architecture of the churches and of the public buildings. But he was pleased with the parks and the many *rura in urbe* which were so conspicuous in the London of those times. A jotting in the *Notes* no doubt sums up his general impression. "It seems to me," he writes, "that

[1] Montesquieu's description is exactly corroborated by César de Saussure. See his letter in a *Foreign View of England*, p. 68, and by Pollnitz, *Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 431.

[2] *Lettres Fam.*, *Œuvres Complètes* (edit. Laboulaye), vol. vii. p. 229; and *Notes sur l'Angleterre.*

Paris is a beautiful city with some ugly things ; London an ugly city with some beautiful things." [1] The gloom of the climate oppressed him, and he had no difficulty, he said, in understanding why the English were so addicted to suicide.[2]

In the life and habits of the lower classes he seems to have taken no interest, but the aristocracy and the middle classes he studied with minute attention. He notices the gross sensuality everywhere prevalent. "An ordinary Englishman," he says, "must have a good dinner, a woman, and comfort. So long as he has the means of getting these he is contented ; if these means fail him, he either commits suicide or turns thief.[3] As he gorges himself with meat, he is very robust till he is about forty or forty-five ; at that age he breaks up."

Corruption he found universal. "La corruption s'est mise dans toutes les conditions." "The sovereign power here," he wrote, "is gold ; honour and virtue are held in small esteem. The English are a free people, but they do not deserve their liberty ; they sell it, he bitterly observes, to the King, and if

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. vii. p. 185.

[2] For his remarks about the frequency of suicide among the English, see *Pensées Diverses*, *Œuvres*, vii. 467 ; *L'Esprit des Lois*, xiv., chaps. xii., xiii. ; *Défense d' l'Esprit des Lois*, *Œuvres*, vol. vi. p. 159.

[3] *Notes*, *Œuvres*, vol. vii. p. 486.

the King returned it to them they would sell it to him again. Every vote is for sale; some of the Scotch members being contented to receive £200 a year as the price of their supporting the Government." [1] He comments with the greatest disgust on a story he had heard of an English gentleman who had given a hundred guineas on condition that for each one he had given he should receive ten whenever he appeared on the stage. He adds that extraordinary things are sometimes done in France, but they are done to spend money; extraordinary things in England, but they are done to get money.[2] Had I been born in England, he says, I should never have consoled myself for not having made a fortune in France. I have no such regret. So far, he continues, from there being any honour and virtue here, there is not even the idea of them.

"I do not judge England by such men as these, but I do judge her by the approbation which she gives them. If such men were regarded as they would be regarded in France, they would never have dared to degrade themselves in such a way." [3]

[1] *Notes*, *Œuvres*, vol. vii. p. 190.
[2] *Notes*, *ibid.*, p. 191.
[3] *Pensées Diverses*, *Œuvres*, vol. vii. p. 155.

But what he dwells on most is the coldness and reserve of the English, and the impossibility of making friends with them. "It is lamentable," he says, "to hear the complaints of strangers, and especially of the French who visit England. They say that they cannot make a friend; that the longer they remain the less way they can make; that their civilities are regarded as insults. But how," he asks, "can the English love strangers when they do not love themselves? how can they ask us to dine with them when they do not dine with each other?

"If it be pleaded that one comes to a country to be loved and honoured, the answer is that neither is necessary. We must do as the people of the country do,—live for ourselves, care for no one, love no one, count on no one. When I am in France I make friends with everyone; in England I make friends with no one; in Italy I pay compliments to everyone; in Germany I drink with everyone." [1]

"The English," he says in his *Pensées Diverses*,[2] "are so occupied that they have not time to be polite; but if they have little politeness they are never unpolite" ("vous font peu de politesses,

[1] *Notes*, *Œuvres*, vol. vii. pp. 185, 186.
[2] *Pensées Diverses*, *Œuvres*, vol. vii. p. 191.

mais jamais d'impolitesses").[1] He notices the originality of the English character; they will not even imitate the ancients whom they admire. "Les Anglois sont des génies singuliers; ils n'imiteront pas même les anciens qu'ils admirent: leurs pièces ressemblent bien moins à des productions régulières de la nature, qu'à ces jeux dans lesquels elle a suivi des hasards heureux."[2] Their performances are not so much like the regular products of nature as the freaks in which she has been guided by happy accidents. He notes also their freedom from prejudice. They have no bias in favour of war, of birth, of titles and dignities, of success with women, of any honours which ministers can bestow; all they wish is that men should be men; they value two things only, riches

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. vii. p. 195.

[2] *Pensées Diverses*, *Œuvres Complètes* (edit. Laboulaye), vol. vii. p. 169. It is impossible not to be struck with the similarity between Montesquieu's picture of the English temper and character and that given by Goldsmith in *The Traveller*. After commenting on the mildness of the climate, Goldsmith goes on to say—

> "Extremes are only in the master's mind.
> Stern o'er each bosom Reason holds her state
> With daring aims irregularly great.
> . . . . . .
> Fierce in their native hardiness of soul,
> True to imagin'd right, above control,
> While e'en the peasant boasts these rights to scan,
> And learns to venerate himself as man."

See also Pollnitz's striking remarks, *Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 455.

and merit. But they are full of envy, and think less of their own prosperity than of the prosperity of others; and this spirit he discerns in all our laws relating to navigation and commerce.[1] To the influence of the climate he attributes two other characteristics peculiar to the English temper—the depression, the *tædium vitæ* which so often leads them to self-destruction, and the impatience, not to be confounded with levity, which makes them incapable of allowing things to remain long in the same state.[2]

He speaks with admiration of the quick-witted intelligence which he found almost universal. "It is impossible," he says, "to be too clever in dealing with the English. A man who is not as quick-witted as themselves can never understand them, and will always be deceived by them"; adding, that the Ministers of his time knew no more of the people of this country than a baby; and he instances d'Hiberville and Kinski, d'Hiberville being fooled by the Jacobites and Kinski by the representations of the Tories. He notices how, beneath the seething and tossing surface of a society agitated by as many factions as human nature has passions, lay, solid and immovable, a bottom of sound

[1] See *L'Esprit des Lois*, bk. xx. chap. vii.

[2] *Ibid.*, bk. xiv. chap. xiii.

practical good sense. "To judge England," he says, "by what appears in the newspapers, one would expect a revolution to-morrow; but all that is signified is that the people, like the people of every other country, grumble at their governors, and are free to express what the people in other countries are only allowed to think."[1] But, though there is much malice, there is no mischief. "A man in England," he says, "may have as many enemies as he has hairs on his head, yet no harm befalls him." Contrasting liberty and equality as they exist in London with liberty and equality as they exist in Venice and in Holland, he pays London the compliment of observing that hers is the liberty and equality of gentlemen; theirs that of libertines and the rabble.[2]

Forgetting, apparently, the money which he himself made out of his own vineyards, he seems to have had something very like contempt for the mercantile spirit, which extended even to the aristocracy; and he conceives that the custom of allowing the nobility to engage in trade is one of those things which has most contributed to weaken the monarchy.[3] "Had I been born in England, I should not," he says, "console myself for not

[1] *Notes*, *Œuvres*, vii. p. 188. [2] *Notes*.
[3] *Ibid.*, bk. xx. chap. xxi.

having made a fortune; in France I am by no means uneasy at not having done so." [1] Of the young noblemen in England he gives anything but a flattering account. "They may be divided," he says, "into two classes. The first consists of those who have some pretensions to learning because they have been a long time at the universities, and that has given them bad manners and a constrained and awkward air; the others know absolutely nothing." [2] By English women he was plainly not attracted; he found them more unresponsive and repellent than the men. They imagine, he says, that a stranger who speaks to them wishes to insult them. "Je ne veux point, disent-elles, *give to him encouragement*." [3] He made no friends among them; nor does he in his subsequent correspondence, if we remember rightly, while frequently referring to his English acquaintance, mention any lady.

Of the state of religion in England he gives a very unfavourable account, fully corroborating what Bishop Butler says in the preface to the *Analogy*. "There is," he writes in his *Notes*,[4] no religion in England; in the Houses of Parliament

[1] *Pensées Diverses*, *Œuvres*, vii. 155.
[2] *Notes*, *Œuvres*, vii. 184.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 195. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 195.

prayers are never attended by more than four or five members, except on great occasions. If one speaks of religion, every one laughs." The very phrase "an article of faith" provokes ridicule. Referring to the committee which had recently been appointed to inquire into the state of religion, he says that it was regarded with contempt. In France he himself passed as having too little religion, in England as having too much; and yet, he grimly adds, "there is no nation that has more need of religion than the English, for those who are not afraid to hang themselves ought to be afraid of being damned." [1] To the Deistic controversy, curiously enough, he makes no reference; but he observes of Whiston's work on the Miracles, that it was not calculated to improve the morals of the people.

III

In parliamentary affairs and in the politics of the time he was, as might be expected, profoundly interested. He had already in his hundred-and-fourth Persian Letter expressed his admiration both of the English theory of monarchy and of the

[1] *Pensées Diverses*, *Œuvres*, vol. vii. p. 167.

independent temper of the English people, of a monarchy which, originating from the people for the benefit of the people, would maintain itself only so long as it observed the conditions under which it existed, of a people in whose eyes passive obedience and non-resistance were no virtues, and who held that no unlimited power could be legitimate because its origin was illegitimate. He attended the sittings of both Houses ; he took notes of the debates ; and he made a thorough study of our constitution and government, the results of which were afterwards embodied in two of the most brilliant and masterly chapters of the *Esprit des Lois*, namely, the sixth chapter of Book VI., and the twenty-seventh chapter of Book XIX.

The evils inherent in party government have, perhaps, never been so strikingly illustrated as in the history of Walpole's administration, from the appearance of the *Craftsman*, in December 1726, to his fall in the spring of 1742. That he contrived to prevent England embroiling herself with continental affairs, and assisted in maintaining the peace of Europe at a most critical time ; that he saved us from the miseries and horrors of a disputed succession ; that he secured the repose whch his country so sorely needed after the Treaty of Utrecht, and thus enabled her to develop her

trade and domestic industries; that he passed many wise measures, and laid the foundations of a mercantile prosperity without precedent in our history—all this must in justice be conceded. But it was purchased at a heavy price. Never, since the days of the Cabal, had England sunk so low in all that constitutes the true life of a great people. The picture which Montesquieu painted is not a shade too dark. Walpole openly scoffed at principle, at virtue, at honour, at religion. Coarse almost to brutality in his manners, in his conversation, in his tastes, he cared for nothing but politics; and politics with him meant little more than the management of the House of Commons and the maintenance of his own supremacy.

The important services which Walpole rendered to his country were the result of great abilities accidentally directed, in the course of a party game, to beneficent and legitimate objects. The only difference between himself and the Opposition was that he was in power and responsible, while they were out of power and irresponsible; he had to act, and to stand or fall by his actions; they had only to criticise, to protest, to clamour. He had the support of the Crown and the command of the public purse; they had what they could compass and effect by unscrupulous intrigue, and the equally

unscrupulous use of the tongue and of the pen. He bribed, and they preached ; he, with the means of corruption, practised it ; they, without the means, denounced it. As he was in alliance with the Court, they thundered against royal favourites and appealed to the country. A very happy title was adopted by them for the double purpose of reflecting by implication on Walpole's policy, and of disguising the monstrous incongruity of such a coalition as they themselves represented ; they called themselves Patriots, and their tactics were simple and uniform—vexatious opposition to every measure, good or bad, which Walpole brought forward, and the inculcation of a policy in foreign and domestic affairs which had no other aim than to thwart and discredit his.

Montesquieu arrived in England when these ignoble feuds were at their height, and the *Craftsman* had become so rancorous and unmeasured in its abuse that each number, before it issued from the press, was submitted to three lawyers to see that nothing in it could be brought technically within the law of libel.[1] In March 1729 the Treaty

[1] This particular we owe to Montesquieu, *Notes sur l'Angleterre :* "*Le Craftsman* est fait par Bolingbroke et par M. Pulteney. On le fait conseiller par trois avocats avant de l'imprimer, pour savoir s'il y a quelque chose qui blesse la loi," *Œuvres*, vii. p. 185.

of Seville had been signed, and the Patriots were taunting Walpole with deserting our old ally Austria, and pandering to our old enemies France and Spain. The treaty had also furnished them with a pretext for harping once more on the grievance of maintaining a standing army in time of peace.

The first debate which Montesquieu attended was on the 28th of January 1730. The question before the House was a motion, introduced by the Secretary of War, and seconded by Sir William Yonge, for keeping up the number of the land forces during the year. It was opposed by Shippen in a vigorous and eloquent speech. The accuracy of the notes taken by Montesquieu is corroborated by the report of the speech in the Parliamentary History ; but he gives some interesting particulars which are not found elsewhere. Shippen, after observing that the troops were not needed, "considering the glorious scene of affairs which the honourable gentleman says is opened to us and to all Europe"—the reference is to the Treaty of Seville—goes on to say, "They are not needed to force the Emperor into an immediate accession, nor are they in any sort necessary for the safety of his Majesty's person and government. Force and violence are the resort of usurpers and tyrants only."[1]

[1] *Parl. Hist.*, viii. 772.

At these words, says Montesquieu, "toute la chambre fut étonnée"; but, according to the *Parliamentary History*, the orator continued thus—

"I perceive some gentlemen take offence at my words, and therefore, that they may not be misconstrued, I will repeat them (et lui les répéta une seconde fois). I assert, then, that it is a grounded maxim in civil science that force and violence are the resort of usurpers and tyrants only, because they are with good reason distrustful of the people whom they oppress, and because they have no other security for the continuance of their unlawful and unnatural dominion than what depends entirely on the strength of their armies."

He concluded, according to the report in the *Parliamentary History*, with a humorous and sarcastic assurance that, however frugal he was inclined to be with regard to the expenditure of public money, there was one item in the Estimates which he did not grudge, and that was the salary of £200 a year for the physician of the Tower. They were all interested, he said, and particularly the Opposition, in maintaining a competent medical officer in that particular place, "for members of this House have been frequently sent thither, and for very different reasons, some for speaking freely, others for acting corruptly"—an allusion to Wal-

pole's incarceration in 1712. Of this part of the speech Montesquieu says nothing, but he refers to a detail not reported in the *History*, namely, that the speaker repudiated Hanoverian maxims. "Il dit ensuite qu'il n'aimoit pas les maximes hanovriennes." He also related—and of this there is no hint in the *History*—that the excitement caused by the speech, and the fear of what the debate might lead to, were so great that it was abruptly brought to a close by cries on all sides of "Divide, divide." [1] "Tout le monde cria 'aux voix,' afin d'arrêter le débat."

The next debate, or rather series of debates, of which Montesquieu gives an account, and at some of which he appears to have been present, were the debates on the Pension Bill. This Bill was perhaps the most ingenious of the many manœuvres of the Patriots. Walpole's strength lay in the support given him by those who were in the receipt of pensions or in the possession of places conferred by, and dependent on, the Crown. The Bill, introduced by Sandys and supported by the whole body of the Opposition, struck at the root of that corruption on which Walpole mainly depended for securing his majorities. It proposed to disable

[1] For all this see *Notes sur l'Angleterre*, where Shippen appears as Chipin, and Cobbett's *Parl. Hist.* (ed. 1811), viii. 771–773.

anyone from sitting in Parliament who enjoyed any pension during pleasure or for a number of years, or any offices held in trust for them from the Crown, and to require from every member sitting in the House a statement on oath that he was not in receipt of such patronage.[1]

The King, who called it "a villainous Bill," which ought "to be torn to pieces in every particular," was as indignant as Walpole was perplexed.[2] But Walpole was more than a match for his crafty opponents. As he knew what popular capital could be made out of an appeal against corruption—for it is one thing for men to defend and quite another thing to practise or utilise it—he allowed it to pass the Commons, knowing perfectly well that it would be rejected by the Lords. He thus threw the responsibility of its defeat on the Upper House, and so relieved himself and his supporters in the Commons of any odium which might be incurred by rejecting a measure so evidently framed in the interests of political virtue. It is not quite clear whether Montesquieu's notes refer to the debates of February 1730, when the Bill was first introduced, or to those of February 1731, when it was introduced a second time.

[1] See *Parl. Hist.*, vol. viii. p. 792 seqq.

[2] Coxe, *Memoirs of Walpole*, vol. i. p. 322.

Townshend appears to have spoken on the first occasion to the effect recorded by Montesquieu (see Coxe's *Walpole*, vol. i. p. 322), but he may possibly have spoken on the second occasion, though this is hardly likely, as he had then retired. In any case he gives some details, including a report of part of a speech of Townshend's in the House of Lords, which are not to be found, so far as I can discover, elsewhere. "Why do we always allow ourselves to incur the public odium of always rejecting this Bill? We ought to increase its penalties, and so frame the Bill that the Commons would reject it themselves." [1] So, in accordance with this happy suggestion, the Lords proceeded to increase the penalty against the corruptor and corrupted from £10 to £500, and decided that disputed elections should be tried by the ordinary judges and not by a committee of the House.

[1] Dans la dernière séance Milord Thousand (Townshend) dit: "Pourquoi nos chargeons-nous toujours de cette haine publique de rejeter toujours le bill? Il faut augmenter les peines et faire le bill de manière que les communes le rejettent elles mêmes: de façon que, par ces belles idées, les seigneurs augmentèrent la peine tant contre le corrupteur que le corrompu, de dix à cinque cents livres, et mirent que se seroient les juges ordinaires qui jugeroient les élections et non la chambre; qu'on suivroit toujours le dernier préjugé dans chaque cour." None of this is reported in the *Parliamentary History*. (*Notes sur l'Angleterre; Œuvres*, vol. vii. p. 192.)

"It was a wonderful Bill," adds Montesquieu, "for it passed against the will of the Commons, the Peers, and the King." He was evidently ignorant of the tactics of Walpole, and could hardly have been behind the scenes in English politics.

But by far the most interesting of Montesquieu's experiences of parliamentary methods was gained during the debate of March 2, 1730, on the affair of Dunkirk. It will be remembered that one of the provisions of the Treaties of Utrecht and of The Hague was that the port and fortifications of Dunkirk should be demolished. This condition the French had been very reluctant to fulfil; and the work of demolition had been so often interrupted, and had proceeded so slowly, that several protests had been made against this dilatoriness in the last reign. Finally, however, the destruction was, or was believed to be, completed. But towards the end of 1729 Bolingbroke had been informed that the inhabitants of Dunkirk had rebuilt and repaired what had been destroyed or half destroyed. The report was confirmed by his secretary, a drunken, blundering rascal, whom he had sent to inquire into the matter. He saw with joy what political capital could be made out of the information, and at once communicated it to the Opposition. The *Craftsman* set to work. A cry was raised that the

French were violating the Treaties of Utrecht and The Hague, and defying England; and it was insinuated that Walpole, in his sympathy with our old enemies, was conniving at their conduct. An address was presented to the King, praying that he would be pleased to give directions that the orders, instructions, reports, and all proceedings in regard to the port and harbour of Dunkirk since the demolition should be laid before the House. On the following day the King acceded to the request. The result was a debate almost without parallel in the heat and fury with which it was conducted. It lasted from one o'clock in the afternoon till nearly three o'clock in the morning of the following day. Walpole, knowing the source of all the misrepresentations on which the action of the Opposition had been based, as well as its object, took occasion to review the career of Bolingbroke,—his treason, his treachery, his base ingratitude. Wyndham defended him, and drew a comparison between his friend and Walpole. Pelham answered Wyndham, and Bolingbroke again became the subject of a scathing exposure and philippic.

"In my opinion," says Horace Walpole, "it was the greatest day, with respect to the thing itself

and the consequences of it, both at home and abroad, for his Majesty and the present Ministry that I ever knew, and must, I think, prove a thunderbolt to the adversaries here as well as to their friends on your side the water." [1]

Of this debate there are two accounts,—one given by Horace Walpole in his letter to Harrington, a passage from which I have just quoted, and the account given by Montesquieu. Of the speeches made, no reports have come down to us; so the extract given by Montesquieu from Walpole's speech is of particular interest. There is only one discrepancy. Walpole says the debate began "about five in the afternoon." Montesquieu says it began "une heure après midi." It may be well in this case to give Montesquieu's account in the original—

"J'allai avant-hier au parlement à la Chambre basse; on y traita de l'affaire de Dunkerque. Je n'ai jamais vu un si grand feu. La séance dura depuis une heure après midi jusqu'à trois heures après minuit. Là, les François furent bien mal menés; je remarquai jusqu'où va l'affreuse jalousie qui est entre les deux nations. M. Walpole attaqua Bolingbroke de la façon la plus cruelle, et disoit qu'il avoit mené toute cette intrigue. Le chevalier

[1] Letter to Lord Harrington and Mr. Poyntz, Coxe's *Walpole*, i. 324.

Windham le défendit. M. Walpole raconta en faveur de Bolingbroke l'histoire du paysan qui, passant avec sa femme sous un arbre, trouva qu'un homme pendu respiroit encore. Il le détacha et le porta chez lui; il revint. Ils trouvèrent le lendemain que cet homme leur avoit volé leurs fourchettes; ils dirent: 'Il ne faut pas s'opposer au cours de la justice: il le faut rapporter où nous l'avons pris.'" [1]

With these experiences it is not strange that Montesquieu had no very high opinion of English politicians. "They have," he remarks, "no fixed purpose, but govern from day to day. Purely selfish and destitute of all principle, their sole aim is to get the better of their opponents; and to attain that end they would sell England and all the Powers of the world." [2]

The people, he found, had little respect for their rulers. The King he regarded as "a gentleman who has a beautiful wife, a hundred servants, a fine equipage, and a good table; he is believed to be happy, but his happiness is all on the outside." [3] There was nothing to admire in him, and scarcely a day passes, says Montesquieu, in which one does not lose some respect for him. On the subject of the monarchy he makes one striking remark. He

[1] *Notes sur l'Angleterre; Œuvres* (edit. Laboulaye), vol. vii. p. 191.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 190. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 188.

is convinced that it is to the interest of France to support the King in England, for a republic would be far more dangerous; a republic would act with all its powers in unison, whereas the King acts with divided powers. "However," he continues, "things cannot rest much longer as they are." [1]

Of the King he speaks elsewhere with contempt. "If he observes decorum in public, in private he quarrels with his wife and with his servants, swears at his steward, and allows the Queen to be grossly insulted by his subjects." The Queen had, it seems, bought a piece of land to add to her private garden at Kensington. Thereupon Lady Bell Molyneux had some of the trees torn up, and brought an action against her for unlawful possession, and, on the Queen expressing her desire to make some arrangement with her, she not only refused to treat, but kept the Queen's secretary waiting three hours before she would admit him to her presence.[2] A French aristocrat might well be excused for expressing disgust and wonder at such a state of things in a country which was ostensibly a monarchy.

Montesquieu was struck with the number and licentiousness of the newspapers and public prints,

[1] *Notes sur l'Angleterre; Œuvres* (edit. Laboulaye), vol. vii. p. 193.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 186.

as well he may have been, for the daily and weekly journals together numbered at least twenty. Conspicuous among them were the *London Gazette*, *British Journal*, *Weekly Medley*, *Evening Post*, *Whitehall Evening Post*, *London Evening Post*, *St. James's Evening Post*, *London Journal*, *Appleby's Weekly Journal*, *British Gazetteer*, *The Postman*, *The Craftsman*, *The Daily Post*, *Fog's Weekly Journal*, *The Weekly Spectator*, and probably others. Few, indeed, are aware that metropolitan journalism was as active at the beginning of George II.'s reign as it is in our day, and quite as popular among the masses. The very slaters, says Montesquieu, have the newspapers brought on to the roof that they may read them ("un couvreur se fait apporter la gazette sur les toits pour la lire").[1] It is clear that he was a regular reader of these publications. One curious Anti-catholic scandal he reports. He tells his friend, Father Cerati, with what indignation he had read how an innocent invention of the Cardinal de Rohan, for playing at backgammon and other games without noise and rattle, had, in one of the current journals,[2] been represented as designed

[1] *Notes sur l'Angleterre ; Œuvres* (edit. Laboulaye), vol. vii. p. 189.

[2] The account and the misrepresentation will be found in *Appleby's Weekly Journal* for November 15, 1729.

to encourage gambling in churches and bedrooms. He comments on the freedom of the press, and observes how easily it might be misunderstood by a foreigner. But its very licentiousness, he remarks, is its corrective ; for, as it expresses with equal heat and intemperance the sentiments and opinions of the innumerable sects and factions into which the country is divided, it can do no mischief, because what is vociferated here neutralises what is vociferated there.

At present, he says, England is the freest country in the world, as the King can do no possible injury to any of his subjects, because his power is limited and controlled by the law. If, he continues, the House of Commons were to succeed in getting the upper hand its power would be unlimited and dangerous, because it would include the executive ; whereas at present unlimited power is divided between the Parliament and King, the executive being lodged in the King, whose power is limited. He makes one prophetic remark, observing that if any nation were abandoned by its colonies, England would be the first to have such an experience. "Je crois que si quelque nation est abandonnée de ses colonies, cela commencera par la nation angloise." [1]

[1] *Notes sur l'Angleterre*, p. 194.

IV

Of Montesquieu's social relations and connection with men of science in this country some interesting particulars can be collected. There can be little doubt that during the early part of his stay in England he was the guest of Chesterfield at his house in St. James's Square; whether he continued to reside there when Chesterfield returned to The Hague early in the following year is uncertain. As the guest and friend of Chesterfield, every house in London was, of course, open to him. He was presented at Court; he was elected a member of the Royal Society; he became intimately acquainted with the Dukes of Richmond and Montague, whom he visited, and in whose society he passed, he said, the happiest hours in his life;[1] with Carteret, afterwards Earl Granville; with Charles Yorke, son of the Lord Chancellor Hardwicke; with Andrew Mitchell, afterwards Ambassador at Berlin, a man of singular charm whom he appears to have regarded almost with affection; and with Martin Folkes, vice-president of the Royal Society, with whom, on leaving England, he regularly

[1] *Lettres Fam.; Œuvres Complètes*, vol. vii. p. 267.

corresponded. What is curious is that he never seems to have met Bolingbroke or Walpole, or to have become acquainted with Pope, or indeed with any other of the distinguished men of letters then living in London. His social relations seem to have been confined almost exclusively to fashionable and aristocratic circles, and to members of the Royal Society.

The reason was probably this. Though he could read English and follow it when spoken, with perfect facility, he could not speak it intelligibly. This we learn from an amusing anecdote told by Diderot. On his return to France, Montesquieu happened to be with some ladies in the country, and, as one of them was an English lady, he addressed her in English ; but his pronunciation was so bad that she burst out laughing. Upon which he good-naturedly observed that it was not the first mortification of the kind which he had met with in his life. He added that, when he was in England, he went to call on the great Duke of Marlborough at Blenheim—obviously a mistake of Diderot's for the Duke of Montague, who had married Marlborough's daughter—and that, while being conducted round the palace by the Duke, he complimented his host on its splendours and beauties in the best English he could command,

having very carefully got up what he thought were appropriate phrases. He had been talking thus for at least an hour, when the Duke said to him: "I entreat you to be good enough to speak to me in English, as I cannot understand French." [1] It may, however, be questioned whether he was ever quite at home in our language. In a letter to Charles Yorke, speaking of Warburton's *Julian*, he says that it had enchanted him "quoique je n'aie que de très mauvais lectures anglois et que j'ai presque oublié tout ce que j'en sçavois." [2]

On October 5, 1730, he was presented by Chesterfield to the King, Queen, and Prince of Wales at Kensington. The Queen, having asked him about his travels, went on to talk about the English stage. "How is it," she inquired of Chesterfield, "that Shakespeare, who lived in the time of Queen Elizabeth, has made his women talk so badly, and such fools as well?" Chesterfield replied that in Shakespeare's time women did not go to the theatres, and, as only inferior actors played female parts,

[1] Diderot, *Lettres à Mdlle. Volland*, Letter LXXX.; *Œuvres Complètes* (ed. Assézat et Tourneux), xix. 134, quoted by Vian.

[2] Letter printed in Campbell's "Life of Charles Yorke," *Lives of the Lord Chancellors*, vii. 75. It is surprising that this interesting letter should not have been included in Montesquieu's collected correspondence.

Shakespeare did not take the trouble to make them speak well. "But I," says Montesquieu, "suggested another reason. To make women speak well a poet must have a knowledge of the world and of good manners; but a knowledge of books is all that a poet requires to make heroes speak well." A commentary on Shakespeare by Chesterfield and Montesquieu, we may remark in passing, would certainly have added most amusingly to the curiosities of criticism. The Queen then asked if it was true that the French preferred Corneille to Racine. Montesquieu, now on firmer ground, replied that Corneille was generally regarded as a sublimer genius than Racine, but Racine as a greater writer than Corneille.[1]

He again met Queen Caroline on the evening of a day on which he had been dining with the Duke of Richmond. At the Duke's table La Boine, whom he describes as a stupid person, though a French envoy, maintained that England was not so large as Guienne, and Montesquieu contradicted and set him down. In the evening the Queen said: "I hear that you have been defending us against your countryman, M. la Boine." Montesquieu gallantly replied: "Madame, I could not imagine a country in which you reigned to be other than

[1] *Notes sur l'Angleterre; Œuvres*, vol. vii. p. 184.

a great country." [1] These were probably not his only interviews with the Queen. In any case, it was believed in Paris that he was a favourite with her, as we gather from a letter addressed to him by Fontenelle, asking him to use his influence to get her to befriend a young *artiste* who, having been most cruelly dismissed from the Opera in Paris, had taken refuge in London.

" On dit que vous êtes fort bien auprès de la reine " ; and he flatteringly adds, " je l'eusse presque deviné, car il y a longtemps que je sais combien elle a du goût pour les gens d'esprit, et combien elle est accoutumée à ceux du premier ordre." [2]

Before he was presented at Court he had had an honour conferred on him which he highly appreciated, and which was, in those days, coveted not merely by men distinguished in science and letters, but even by royalty itself. On February 26, 1730, he was elected a member of the Royal Society. This honour he no doubt owed partly to the influence of Chesterfield and the vice-president, Martin Folkes, and partly to the fact that he was a member of the French Academy. His

[1] Montesquieu relates this with great complacency in his *Pensées Diverses*, *Œuvres* (edit. Laboulaye), vol. vii. p. 156.

[2] Fontenelle, *Œuvres Complètes* (ed. Paris, 1818), vol. ii. p. 566.

chief claim to this distinction, and a very legitimate one, was the reputation which he had gained by the scientific papers read by him at the Academy of Bordeaux.[1] He announced his election to his friend, Father Cerati, in a letter dated March 1, 1730: "Je fus reçu il y a trois jours membre de la Société royale de Londres." [2] During the remainder of his visit he regularly attended its meetings.

With the vice-president, Martin Folkes, who had been the friend of Newton, and who was one of the most eminent scientific men of those times, he formed an affectionate friendship. In a letter addressed to him many years later he says: "Of all people in the world your memory is dearest to me; I would rather live with you than with any one. To live with you is to love you." [3] These words may imply that, during part of his visit to England, he resided with Folkes. His connection with the Royal Society undoubtedly exercised great influence on him, and introduced him to much which was of incalculable importance to his great work. To the end of his life he took the greatest

[1] "Sur la cause de l'écho"; "Sur l'usage des glandes rénales"; "Sur la cause de la pesanteur des corps"; "Observations sur l'histoire naturelle"; "Sur la cause de la transparence des corps."

[2] *Lettres Fam.* (February 1742); *Œuvres*, vol. vii. p. 253.

[3] *Lettres Fam.*, xxx., *Œuvres*, vol. vii. p. 253.

interest in its transactions; and it was under his supervision that Robert Wallace's *Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind in Ancient and Modern Times* was translated into French.

It was probably Folkes who introduced Montesquieu to Charles Yorke, who came afterwards to so tragical an end, just after receiving the Great Seal. Charles Yorke, in addition to various accomplishments, was one of the most charming men of his time, and Montesquieu highly valued his friendship, keeping up a constant correspondence with him after he left England.[1] Yorke sent him Warburton's *Dissertation on Julian*, which Montesquieu highly appreciated, expressing his admiration in such flattering terms that Yorke forwarded the letter to Warburton. With the letter he sent a note, which is interesting as showing the impression which Montesquieu had made on him—

"His heart is as good as his understanding, in all he says or writes, though he mixes now and then a little of the French *clinquant* with all his brightness and solidity of genius as well as originality of expression."[2]

And this seems to have been his just measure.

[1] For Montesquieu's relations with Charles Yorke, see Campbell's *Lives of the Lord Chancellors*, vii. 75, 76.

[2] Warburton's *Correspondence* (ed. 1809), p. 507.

We have seen that Montesquieu's real opinion of the English was not one which would be likely to please them ; but he was too well-bred and too sincerely sensible of the hospitality he everywhere received to express himself in anything but the most flattering terms. In Spence's anecdotes we read—

"Monsieur de Montesquieu, the author of the *Persian Letters*, is now with Lord Waldegrave, and is come to England with him. He says there are no men of true sense born anywhere but in England." [1]

Some years afterwards he wrote—

"The English love the great men of their country, and in that extraordinary nation there are few people who have not some personal merit." [2]

How little was generally known of his movements is indicated by the supposition that he was staying with Waldegrave, who was then at Vienna. And indeed, it is singular that the presence of such a distinguished man was, as far as the general public was concerned, so entirely ignored. There is not a single reference to him, so far as I can discover, in the literary correspondence of those times, or

[1] *Anecdotes* (edit. Singer), p. 250.
[2] *Lettres Fam.*, cxxvi. ; *Œuvres*, vol. vii. p. 407.

in the current newspapers; his arrival, his movements, his departure are alike unchronicled. And yet the *Lettres Persanes* had been translated into English as early as 1722, had been extremely popular, and had been reissued in a second edition not long after his arrival in England. His name was not, indeed, on the title-page; but their authorship, as the translator's preface shows, was as much an open secret in London as it was in Paris. The only reference to him, or rather to his writings, which I can find in the public prints is an announcement in the *Weekly Medley* for November 29, 1728, of a translation of *Mahmoud and Genesvide*, "written by the author of the *Persian Letters*." I need hardly say that no such work had ever come, or ever was to come, from his pen; but the fiction at least shows that the publishers thought his name a name to conjure with.

That so little notice should have been taken of him by the journals, and in the ana of contemporary authors, is the more remarkable when we remember how frequently and how prominently Voltaire before him, and Rousseau after him, figure in both. But the reasons are not difficult to guess. One we have mentioned already—his defective knowledge of the language which kept him out of

general society. Another is probably to be found in his aristocratic leanings. He says in his *Pensées Diverses*—

"Quoique mon nom ne soit ni bon ni mauvais, n'ayant guère que deux cent cinquante ans de noblesse prouvée, cependant j'y suis attaché." [1]

In other words, he was an aristocrat who could not afford to trifle with his position. Like La Rochefoucauld and Bussy-Rabutin among his own countrymen, and like Horace Walpole and Gibbon among ours, he neither wished to be regarded as a man of letters nor affected the society of men of letters. Hence his acquaintance in this country was confined to Chesterfield's circle, and to a body of which almost every nobleman in England with any taste for learning was a member. If Chesterfield and Folkes were the links which connected him with intellectual society, the Dukes of Richmond and Montague appear to have been the chosen companions of his less serious recreations. In his correspondence he writes that the happiest hours of his life had been spent with them, and that it was impossible to say whether they should be loved most or respected most.[2]

[1] *Œuvres*, vol. vii. p. 152.

[2] *Lettres Fam.*, xxiv.; *Œuvres*, vol. vii. p. 245.

As Montesquieu had convivial tastes, we need not question the sincerity of the statement about happy hours; but in his difficulty in settling the proportion of love and respect is, we fear, to be discerned the *clinquant* of which Charles Yorke speaks. A duller and grosser person than Charles Lennox, second Duke of Richmond, never existed. Queen Caroline compared him to a mule, and doubted whether he was more than half-witted; while Horace Walpole described him as "the only man who loved the Duke of Newcastle." He was a heavy drinker; and in his brutal and stupid orgies at Goodwood champagne flowed so freely that Montesquieu deemed it expedient to warn his friend, the Abbé Comte de Guasco, against toasting him too often at Richmond's table.[1] John, Duke of Montague, had certainly convivial qualities of the highest order, and was the author of a hoax compared with which the best of Theodore Hooke's dwindles into vulgar horseplay;[2] but he was, and remained all his life, little more than an overgrown schoolboy. Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, his mother-in-law, thus describes him[3]—

[1] *Lettres Fam.*, *Œuvres*, vol. vii. p. 332.

[2] For an account of this inimitable pleasantry, see Jesse's *Memoirs of the Court of England from the Revolution to the Death of George II.*, vol. iii. pp. 58–61.

[3] See *Walpole's Letters* (edit. Cunningham), vol. i. p. 339.

"All my son-in-law's talents lie in things only natural in boys of fifteen years old, and he is about two-and-fifty: to get people into his garden and wet them with squirts, and to invite people to his country-houses and put things into their beds to make them itch, and twenty such pretty fancies like these."

Of one of these pretty fancies Mostesquieu was the victim. The Duke had invited him, shortly after they had become acquainted, to his country-house,—in all probability Blenheim. Not long after his arrival it was arranged that there should be "a play of ambassadors," which means, I suppose, that host and guest were to approach each other with stately ceremony. Meanwhile a large tub full of cold water had been concealed in a hollow under the ground just where the guest had to step as he made his bow. As soon as his feet reached the tub, in he went, soused over head and ears in the water. "I thought it odd, to be sure," said Montesquieu, when he told the tale many years afterwards to Charlemont,

"but a traveller, as you well know, must take the world as it goes; and indeed," he good-naturedly added, "his great goodness to me and his incomparable understanding far overpaid me for all the inconveniences of my ducking." [1]

[1] Hardy's *Life of Charlemont*, vol. i. p. 65.

One of the most striking features of Montesquieu's temper is illustrated by his commentary on this incident. A grosser outrage on those social decencies which even savages respect could be scarcely imagined than the conduct of this English nobleman. But Montesquieu, with reference to it, went on to say—

"Liberty, however, is the glorious cause; that it is which gives human nature fair-play and allows every singularity to show itself, and which, for one less agreeable oddity it may bring to light, gives to the world ten thousand great and useful examples."

And it was with the same lucid, balanced, and catholic intelligence that he penetrated beneath the surface of all that met his view in England. In the ignoble game which Walpole and the Patriots were playing at Westminster, in all the evils and curses inherent in party government, in the unbridled licence of the press, in the coarse and brutal manners of the commonalty, he saw that for which all the elegance that made the Paris of the *Grand Monarque* the home of the Graces and the comely image of specious tranquillity would have been, after all, but a sorry exchange.[1]

[1] This is undoubtedly what is to be deduced from the general tenor of his writings; what he says in the preface to the *Esprit des Lois* was no doubt a concession to prudence.

It is not likely that Montesquieu visited Ireland, but he was interested in the Irish question, and divined its importance. In a conversation which he had with Charlemont many years later, at La Brède, he strongly advocated the Union.

"Were I an Irishman" (he said) "I should certainly wish for it; and, as a general lover of liberty, I sincerely desire it; and for this plain reason, that an inferior country connected with one much her superior in force can never be certain of the permanent enjoyment of constitutional freedom unless she has by her representatives a proportional share in the legislature of the superior kingdom." [1]

But it was not in politics, in science, and in social life only that Montesquieu was interested. Just before his arrival in England, and during his residence here, William Kent, the forerunner of Brown, was revolutionising horticultural embellishment and initiating landscape-gardening. The old Dutch and French style, in which, as Pope's happy satire expresses it—

> "No pleasing intricacies intervene,
> No artful wildness to perplex the scene;
> Grove nods at grove, each alley has a brother,
> And half the platform just reflects the other,"

[1] Hardy's *Life of Charlemont* (ed. 1810) vol. i. p. 70.

was being exchanged for what Walpole calls the style "that realises painting and improves nature." It was thus that Kent laid out the gardens of Carlton House and Kensington, and Pelham's garden and park at Claremont. The new fashion had become the rage; and among its admirers none was more enthusiastic than Montesquieu. He determined, on his return to France, to reconstruct the grounds of La Brède on Kent's model, and he gave his steward L'Eveillé no rest till the work was done. He refers more than once in his correspondence to the delight he felt in seeing his pleasance thus charmingly transformed. "I long to show you my villa," he said to Charlemont, "as I have endeavoured to form it according to the English taste, and to cultivate and dress it after the English manner"; [1] and in describing it to a friend he is careful to add that he had laid it out in a fashion "dont j'ai pris l'idée en Angleterre."

The exact date of Montesquieu's departure from England it is impossible to fix. M. Edgar Zévort says that it was in April 1731, but he appears to have no authority for this statement. He was certainly at home at La Brède, as his correspondence shows, on August 10, 1731. The latest event of

[1] Hardy's *Charlemont*, vol. i. p. 63.

which the date can be fixed is his presentation at Court on October 5, 1730. But tradition agrees in assigning a longer period for his residence here than would be compatible with its termination in the autumn of 1730. D'Alembert in his *Eloge* says that Montesquieu was in England for three years; the writer of the article in the *Biographie Universelle* gives two years; so also does J. J. Rutledge in his *Éloge de Montesquieu.*[1] In the *Éloge* by his son the time assigned is nearly two years ("près de deux ans").[2] The dates given by MM. Vian,[3] Sorel, and others—from November 1729 to April 1731, and from October 1729 to August 1731—being purely conjectural, carry no authority. Taking tradition and probability as our guides, we may assume that he left England either in the spring or in the summer of 1731; and, as he arrived on October 23, 1729, he must therefore have resided here, as his son states, nearly two years.

Of his visit to England he retained to the last the most pleasing impressions; he spoke of it more than once as the happiest time in his life. When, many years afterwards, Charlemont visited him at La Brède, he found the President full of delightful

[1] *Éloge de Montesquieu*, p. 17.
[2] See Appendix to Vian (ed. 1878), p. 401.
[3] *Histoire de Montesquieu*, p. 128.

memories of England and of the English, though perhaps courtesy had something to do with the enthusiasm with which he spoke of them. "I too," he said, "have been a traveller, and have seen the country in the world which is most worthy of our curiosity, I mean England." Adding, "there is no country under Heaven which produces so many great and shining characters." [1] But his correspondence vouches for the sincerity of his sentiments. "How I wish" (he wrote to his friend Cerati) "that I could visit England again with you!" "The longer you remain in London, the more kindness you will receive," were his words to another friend, words, it must be owned, very difficult to reconcile with what he had written in his *Notes sur l'Angleterre*. And for the rest of his life he kept in close touch with his English friends. With Folkes he regularly corresponded, and he proposed that they should interchange copies of important books printed in England and France, politely adding, "il est bien certain que la marchandise angloise vaudra mieux que la françoise." [2]

Some twelve years after his departure he communicated to the Royal Society, through Folkes, an interesting paper "On stones of a regular figure

[1] Hardy's *Life of Charlemont*, vol. i. p. 64.

[2] *Letters Fam.*, *Œuvres* (edit. Laboulaye), vol. vii. p. 265.

found near Bagnères in Gascony." [1] He corresponded with Hume, who sent him his *Treatise on Human Nature*, which he read, he says, with delight. He exchanged letters with Warburton—whose *Dissertation on Julian* had " enchanted " him—on the subject of Bolingbroke's posthumous works ; and his letter to Warburton on the distinction between attacks on Natural and Revealed Religion is of singular interest.[2] When his sight was failing, and when he had, as he tells us himself, almost forgotten all the English he knew, he employed an English secretary to read to him, and took care to be regularly informed of what was being produced in philosophy and science on this side of the Channel.

Of his correspondence it is quite clear that a large portion has either been destroyed or lost ; and nothing is more to be regretted than the absence of the letters which passed between himself and Chesterfield. For Chesterfield he had the sincerest affection and esteem ; he thought him the best of critics ; and it is not unlikely that the *Esprit des Lois* owed much, and very much, to his English friend's suggestions. The affection and esteem were mutual. As soon as the news of

[1] Printed in the *Philosophic Transactions of the Royal Society*, xliii. 26–34, but not included in his works.

[2] *Œuvres* (edit. Laboulaye), vol. vii. pp. 431–434.

Montesquieu's death reached England, Chesterfield inserted in a London newspaper a memorial of his friend, which is a model of graceful and discriminating eulogy.

"His virtues did honour to human nature; his writings justice. A friend to mankind, he asserted their undoubted and inalienable rights with freedom, even in his own country, whose prejudices in matters of religion and government he had long lamented, and endeavoured, not without some success, to remove. He well knew and justly admired the happy constitution of this country, where fixed and known laws equally restrain monarchy from tyranny, and liberty from licentiousness. His works will illustrate his name and survive him as long as right reason, moral obligation, and the true spirit of laws shall be understood, respected, and maintained." [1]

What Montesquieu owed to England is exactly indicated in D'Alembert's *Éloge*—

"He formed intimate friendships with men accustomed to think and to prepare themselves for great actions by profound studies; with them he instructed himself in the nature of the government, and attained to a thorough knowledge of it."

[1] See the *Evening Post*, February 1755; and Stanhope's *Chesterfield's Letters*, iv. p. 148.

He said himself, in generalising on what his acquaintance with the chief countries in Europe had taught him, that Germany was made to travel in, Italy to sojourn in, France to live in, and England to think in."[1] His stay in England gave the ply to his future studies. It transformed the author of the *Persian Letters* and of the *Temple de Gnide* into the author of the *Considérations sur la Grandeur et Décadence des Romains* and of the *Esprit des Lois*. The study of our constitution, of our politics, of our laws, of our temper and idiosyncrasies, of our social system, of our customs, manners, and habits, furnished him with material which was indispensable to the production of his great work. It was here that he saw illustrated, as it were in epitome and with all the emphasis of glaring contrast, the virtues, the vices, the potentialities of good, the potentialities of evil, inherent in monarchy, in aristocracy, in the power of the people. It was here that he perceived and understood what liberty meant, intellectually, morally, politically, socially. He saw it in its ugliness, he saw it in its beauty. Patiently, soberly, without prejudice, without heat, he investigated, analysed, sifted, balanced; and on the conclusions that he

[1] D'Alembert's *Éloge de Montesquieu*.

drew were founded most of the generalisations which have made him immortal.

Nor must we forget the importance of the more immediate result of his English studies. If Rapin de Thoyras anticipated him in interpreting constitutional government to Europe, it was not till Montesquieu reinterpreted it that its principles attracted serious and influential interest—with what momentous consequences we all know. In English history he was minutely and profoundly versed; and illustrations from it spring more readily to his pen than any others. Essentially original as his own work is, his indirect indebtedness to English writers is certainly considerable. That he could read and follow our language in conversation is proved by the untranslated books with which he was acquainted, and by the notes which he took in Parliament. He was intimately acquainted with the writings of Locke, whom he calls the great instructor of mankind; he was versed in the writings of Hobbes; he had analysed Algernon Sidney's *Discourses*. With Harrington's *Oceana*, a work which has undoubtedly had great influence on him,[1] he was well acquainted.

[1] For the influence of Harrington on Montesquieu, see some interesting remarks in J. J. Rutledge's *Éloge de Montesquieu*, pp. 19–22.

He had carefully perused the histories of Burnet and Echard, and knew Stowe's *Survey of London*. He had read More's *Utopia* and Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*. He more than once quotes Addison's *Spectator* with a felicity which could only have come from familiarity. For Shaftesbury he seems to have had great admiration, whimsically placing him with Plato, Malebranche, and Montaigne at the head of the great poets of the world. From the narratives of English travellers are derived at least a third of his illustrations of eastern and savage life. To our poets, indeed, he seldom refers; but his reference to the poets of his own country are almost as rare. We had nothing to teach him in style and in the art of composition, though the England of his sojourn was the England of Bolingbroke and Pope; and, so far as mere books are concerned, he had, when he visited us, little to learn. But it is not too much to say that the *Esprit des Lois* would either never have seen the light, or would have appeared without many of its most shining parts, had Montesquieu never set foot on our shores.

"Après deux ans de sejour à Londres," as Villemain[1] puts it, "Montesquieu revint, enrichi, comme Voltaire, de tout un ordre d'idées nouvelles

[1] *Cours de Littérature Française*, Lecture xiv. *Dix-Huitième Siècle.*

—to proceed at once to the composition first of *La Grandeur et la Décadence des Romains*, and then to the serious inception of the *Esprit des Lois*. An aphorism attributed to him no doubt exactly indicates the nature of the important debt he owed to his visit to this country,—"one should travel in Germany, sojourn in Italy, and *think* in England." It was in England that the ideas embodied in both these masterpieces took definite form, in England that they found stimulus and inspiration, from England that they drew nutriment.

ROUSSEAU IN ENGLAND

I

THE circumstances under which Rousseau sought an asylum in England, and his residence here between January 1766 and May 1767, can scarcely be described as an unwritten chapter in his biography, because they have been treated with some fulness both by Burton in his *Life of Hume*, and by Mr. John Morley in his well-known monograph on Rousseau. But Burton confines himself chiefly to Rousseau's relations with Hume; and considerations of symmetry, as well as the plan and design of Mr. Morley's work, necessarily precluded him from entering too much into detail about what was after all only a short episode in a long and somewhat crowded life. And yet this episode well deserves particular attention. Nothing which concerns a man so truly extraordinary can be without interest; everything which can throw light on his peculiarities and character is of importance. The visit to England was the turning-point of his life;

Jean Jacques Rousseau.

From an original oil painting by Wright of Derby
Reproduced by kind permission of Sir Maurice Bulkeley, Bart.

it was more ; it witnessed or occasioned the transformation of the author of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, of *Emile*, of the *Contrat Social*, of the *Lettre à Christophe de Beaumont*, into the author of the *Confessions*, of the *Rêveries*, of the *Dialogues*, and of the *Letter to General Conway*. It found him, no doubt, a compound as whimsical as Pascal's and Pope's picture of man, but consistent in inconsistency and perfectly intelligible,—it left him a psychological problem almost as puzzling and fascinating as Swift.

It is commonly supposed that the eccentricities which always distinguished him simply became exaggerated in England, and that he was essentially the same man between 1766 and his death as he had been before. This was certainly not the case. To speak of him indeed as losing the balance of his mind and as becoming actually insane will help us to no solution, for balance he never had, and insanity in the ordinary acceptation of the term is, for several reasons, out of the question as an explanation of his peculiarities. But a great change passed over him. He was no longer what he had been. His genius, it is true, burned at times as brightly as ever, but it became depraved and morbid. The noble traits which had for so many years more than redeemed his extravagance and

folly reveal themselves only by glimpses. He ceased practically to be responsible either for his actions or for his utterances. It was not merely that he lost all control over himself and allowed his will to become the prey of every momentary impulse, of every caprice of fancy, of every accident of impression, but that he found a perverted pleasure in torturing himself with pure delusions, delusions as baseless and monstrous as the forgeries of madness. The world owes too much to Rousseau to do him injustice, and greater injustice could not be done him than to draw no distinction between his character and writings during the latter years of his life and his character and writings when he was in his vigour. Unfortunately, however, for his reputation he is best known and commonly judged by the work of his degeneracy, the *Confessions*, the greater part of which was written during his residence in England, and by the impression made by his quarrel with Hume. But the Rousseau who penned the *Confessions* and who quarrelled with Hume was not the Rousseau who is the legitimate object of the homage and gratitude of the civilised world, but the victim of a mysterious and terrible malady, the first symptoms of which began to declare themselves shortly after he arrived in London. If we assume, as his biographers

assume, that no real change took place in him, but that his normal and natural infirmities simply became accentuated, it is impossible to regard him with any other feelings than contempt and repulsion. The assumption, indeed, involves more; it casts suspicion and discredit on his career and character as a whole, on his sincerity as a man, on his sincerity as a writer. But if we assume what for my own part I believe to be the case, and what I venture to think a careful review of his residence in England will establish, then the true Rousseau becomes separated from the false, and profound commiseration takes the place of contempt.

And nowhere, as Mr. Morley well observes, is the change which at this time passed over him so painfully and even so terribly apparent as in the portrait of him painted by Wright of Derby in the spring of 1766, an impression of which appears as the frontispiece of this essay. "It is," says Mr. Morley, "almost as appalling in its realism as some of the dark pits that open before the reader of the *Confessions*." Who, indeed, can mistake the story which that tragic face too surely tells?—that furrow-ploughed brow, those lined and harassed features, that glance of mingled impotence, dejection, and defiance?

II

A brief review of the chief incidents in his career from the summer of 1762 till he landed at Dover is a necessary preliminary to an account of his life in England. "Ici commence l'œuvre de ténèbres dans lequel, depuis huit ans, je me trouve enseveli," are the words with which in his *Confessions* he opens the records of the second part of that year.[1] And the clouds had gathered with appalling suddenness. It was two o'clock on the morning of the 9th of June in that year; he had just closed the Bible, in which he had been reading the story of the Levite of Ephraim, and had sunk into a half-doze. All at once he was disturbed by lights and noises. An express had arrived from Madame de Luxembourg, enclosing a letter from the Prince de Conti. It informed him that the Parliament of Paris had resolved to arrest him as the author of *Emile*, and that he must fly at once. Leaving his mistress Thérèse to look after his papers and to settle his affairs, he hurried off in a postchaise in the direction

[1] *Confessions*, Partie II. Livre XI. *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. vi. p. 137, edit. Lahure. All the references in the notes are to this edition.

of Switzerland. From this moment he knew no peace. The Parliament of Paris had set a precedent which other Councils were not slow to follow. Before the end of the month the Council of Geneva ordered *The Social Contract*, as well as *Emile*, to be burnt, and forbade the author, under pain of immediate arrest, to set foot on their territory. The Council of Berne was about to follow, but he anticipated their action by removing to Motiers, in the Val de Travers, a principality of Neuchâtel, then under the dominion of Prussia. Here he was joined by Thérèse, and here for upwards of three years he resided, till the autumn of 1765.

But he had no rest. He had scarcely settled there, secure under the protection of George, Lord Keith, the Governor of Neuchâtel, when he learned to his surprise that the Sorbonne had condemned *Emile* and censured its author. This was followed by a *mandement* of Christophe de Beaumont, Archbishop of Paris, against him, which affected him, he said, much more, for the Archbishop was a man whom he had always respected. He replied to this in what is the masterpiece of his polemical writings, the *Lettre à Christophe de Beaumont*, which well deserves to be read by every one who would know what Rousseau can be in his hour of strength. He had scarcely answered the Archbishop when ignobler

adversaries began to pester him. Eight years before he had been restored to the Reformed Church; he now publicly attended the services and was admitted by the pastor to the Communion. This greatly irritated his many enemies, and his condemnation by the Council of Geneva furnished them with a handle against him. But if he had many adversaries he had many partisans, and a furious controversy ensued. Matters became the more complicated because his case involved not only the whole question of the prerogatives of the Council, but a collision between the principles of civil liberty and oligarchic despotism; it was not simply a religious feud, but a political feud also. The allies of the Council and oligarchy took their stand with his persecutors, the opponents of both with his supporters. The Council found a voice in a series of letters, written with great vigour and ability by Jean Robert Tronchin, under the title of *Lettres écrites de la Campagne*. To these Rousseau, who had now taken the bold step of formally renouncing his rights of citizenship and burgess-ship in Geneva, replied in his famous *Lettres de la Montagne*, a work which, read with indignant sympathy, won him the fame of a martyr in every country in Europe. Nothing he ever wrote made a deeper impression, particularly in

England. Tronchin had been an honourable opponent. This could not be said for his next assailant. A more atrocious libel than the *Sentiments des Citoyens*, which Rousseau attributed, but attributed erroneously, to the Pastor Vernes, never disgraced controversy. Rousseau's answer was its republication in Paris with a prefatory note stating that it was from the pen of a Genevese pastor, and he gave his name. Vernes denied that he was the author, as well he might do, for the real author was Voltaire.[1] Rousseau insisted, however, that the culprit was Vernes, and for some weeks, to the infinite amusement of the real culprit, asseverations and denials were bandied between them. The clergy of Neuchâtel very naturally took the side of Vernes, and Rousseau was admonished not to present himself at the next Communion. Against this he protested, but protested in vain.

The whole place was now up in arms against him. He had in truth embroiled himself with enemies who never forgive, and who, if they are foiled at one weapon, have no difficulty in finding another ; and the controversy soon travelled out

[1] See Voltaire, *Œuvres Complètes* (Beuchot, Paris), vol. xxv. p. 309 seqq., with Beuchot's note. Mr. Morley and the biographers do not appear to be aware that this was one of the many monkey-tricks of Voltaire.

of the domain of legitimate polemics. A conspiracy was formed to drive him out of the province by inciting the laity and peasantry against him. The attention of the orthodox who could read was directed to the Savoyard vicar's profession of faith in *Emile*; of those who could not read, to the deductions drawn from it by those who could, and to the censure of the Sorbonne. To the virtuous it was pointed out that he was living with a mistress, and this gave great scandal in a district where the *bourgeois* were scrupulous about such matters. His solitary rambles, his strange dress, and his eccentric habits became pretexts for circulating calumnies of all kinds against him. It was even rumoured that he was Anti-Christ, and in the eyes of the vulgar his Armenian furred bonnet, caftan, and cincture lent colour to the accusation. The wildest stories were current about the object of his botanical excursions; it was represented that he was a secret poisoner, and that under the pretence of botanising he went about in quest of noxious herbs. But nothing, it seems, did him more injury than a report that in one of his writings he had asserted that women had no souls. This was a master stroke on the part of his enemies, for it was one of those remarks which, in Swift's phrase, is levelled to the meanest intelligence. It struck

home, as it was sure to do, going the round of every household in the province. Every lover, every uxorious husband, every dutiful son and daughter, and every woman in the district, to a soul, joined the cry against this atrocious libeller of the female sex.

At the end of the summer of 1765 the unhappy man found it impossible to remain longer at Motiers. Stones were thrown at him in the street; both he and his mistress Thérèse were insulted and assaulted whenever they went abroad. A diabolical plot was formed to kill him as he left his house, and it seemed certain that the only thing that could save him from assassination was flight. After some hesitation he resolved to betake himself to the Ile de Saint Pierre, a charming little island in the Lake of Bienne, the beauties of which he has celebrated in the fifth of his *Rêveries*. Here for a few weeks he had peace, and here he wished and expected to end his days. But the island was in the jurisdiction of Berne, and scarcely had he settled there when he received notice from the Bernese Government to quit the island and their territory within fifteen days. The blow was as crushing as it was unexpected. He knew that the decree was irrevocable, and that it was useless to resist it. All he could do was to gain time. He wrote to the

Bailli Graffenried, telling him that he would obey the orders of the authorities, but imploring him to request them to grant him a few weeks that he might make his preparations. Two days afterwards he followed this letter with another. It was a petition to the Bernese Government to lodge him in a prison where he would live at his own expense, and engage not to touch pen or paper or hold any communication with the outside world for the rest of his life. "All my passions," he said, "are extinguished; nothing remains but an ardent desire for repose and retirement." His miseries, he complained, were without example. To a man in health and strength the ceaseless distractions in which for many years his life had been passed would be terrible; to a poor invalid exhausted with weariness and misfortune and anxious only for the peace of death they were intolerable.[1] But all was of no avail. He must quit the Bernese territory. What to do and whither to go he knew not. To return to Neuchâtel was out of the question. From any long journey he shrank in horror, for winter was approaching, and he was afflicted by a malady which made travelling not merely inconvenient but most distressing. He

[1] See this most pathetic letter,—Lettre DCCXVII., Année 1765, *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. viii. pp. 44–47.

had, however, no choice ; he must seek an asylum somewhere. Should he go to Vienna, where his friend the Prince of Würtemberg, who had long wished the author of *Emile* to undertake the education of his daughter, had already procured a passport for him ? Or to Corsica, which had invited him to be its legislator, and where he knew Paoli would welcome him with open arms ? Should he accept Madame d'Houdetot's invitation to settle in Normandy, or Saint Lambert's to settle in Lorraine ? Should he join his kind patron, Lord Keith, at Berlin or Potsdam, and throw himself on the protection of the King of Prussia, who had already befriended him ? This at last seemed the best plan. The 30th of October found him at Bâle, and the beginning of November at Strasburg, but so prostrated with what he describes as the most detestable journey which he had ever made in his life, that it would be as impossible for him, he said, to go on to Berlin as it would be to go to China. At Strasburg he changed his plans, and, as he could not bear the fatigue of travelling to Berlin, he determined to accept an invitation which had been more than once pressed on him, but which he had always refused.

III

In no country in Europe was Rousseau more highly esteemed than in England. The most favourable reviews both of his *Nouvelle Héloïse* and of his *Emile* had appeared in the English newspapers and periodicals. Long extracts from the first had shortly after its publication been a prominent feature in the columns of the *London Chronicle*, which had also instituted an elaborate parallel between him and Richardson. The *Gentleman's Magazine* had drawn attention to its beauties. Translations of it were widely circulated, and Julie, Saint Preux, Walmar, and Lord Edward were as familiar to polite society on this side of the Channel as they were on the other.[1] *Emile* was equally popular, though with a different class of readers, and its theories were discussed in print and in conversation by all who were interested in the topics which it treats. The hearts of Puritans had been won by the *Letter to D'Alembert*, a translation of which in the *Annual Register* closely followed the

[1] In a letter to Madame Boy de la Tour he distinctly says that this was the reason of his coming to England. *Lettres Inédites*, publiées par Henri de Rothschild, 1892.

appearance of the original. The *Social Contract* had not been regarded with so much favour, but its audacity and originality had excited the keenest curiosity about its author. The cruel persecutions, moreover, to which he had been submitted in Switzerland and France, and the proscription of his writings, had been faithfully recorded in the public prints, and had won for him the sympathy of all friends of liberty. He was the native of a principality which had been in close touch with England ever since the days of the Marian exiles. Many distinguished Genevese had been associated with the Royal Society. Newton corresponded with Abauzit. Delorme, François d'Ivernois, and Mallet du Pan had upheld the British Constitution as a model for Europe. Many eminent Genevans —Alphonse Turretin, Tronchin, André de Luc, De Saussure, Abauzit—all had studied in the English Universities.[1] The friend whom he most loved and respected was a Scotsman, and in Gibbon, whose neighbour he had been in 1763, he had another link between Geneva and England. Nor could he have been ignorant of the hospitable welcome which another neighbour, Voltaire, had received in 1726. Though he could neither read

[1] See M. Joseph Texte's *J. J. Rousseau et les Origines du Cosmopolitisme Littéraire*, p. 107.

nor speak English, he was well acquainted through translation with the writings of Hobbes, Algernon Sidney, Locke, Milton, Addison, Pope, Richardson, and the masterpiece of De Foe, all of which had been influential on his work.[1] Nor was this all. Some years before, he had been entranced with Voltaire's *Lettres Philosophiques*, and in 1756 he had read with equal interest Béat de Muralt's *Lettres sur les Anglais et les Français*,[2] both of which had not only impressed him most favourably with regard to the English, but had shown him what a cordial welcome would in all probability await him.

As early as the spring of 1762, when Rousseau first sought refuge at Neuchâtel, the good sense of Lord Keith had seen that his only safe asylum was the asylum which Voltaire had sought. There he could enjoy what he never could enjoy on the Continent — "placidam sub libertate quietem." This Lord Keith explained to him, promising to recommend him to his friends in England, and offering to place at his disposal a suite of apartments at Keith Hall, a residence which belonged to him

[1] The influence exercised on him by these writers requires no illustration. For his admiration of Milton, see *Emile*, Livre V. *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. ii. p. 216. See, too *Apologie du Théâtre*, *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. i. p. 343.

[2] Texte, p. 122.

in Scotland. Madame de Boufflers gave him the same advice, and both of them wrote to Hume. Hume's reply reached Madame de Boufflers when she was in London, in the summer of 1762. He expressed the utmost readiness to assist Rousseau, for there was, he said, no man in Europe of whom he had entertained a higher idea, and whom he would be prouder to serve ; he revered, he said, his greatness of mind, " which makes him fly obligations and dependence." He would instantly write to all his friends, " and make them sensible of the honour M. Rousseau has done us in choosing an asylum in England." The English, he added, were happy at present in a king who had a taste for literature, and he only hoped that M. Rousseau would not disdain the benefits which such a king would be sure to confer on him. Hume then wrote directly to Rousseau, supposing, erroneously, that he was already in London. Meanwhile, Madame de Boufflers had translated into French those parts of Hume's letter which had reference to Rousseau, and forwarded it, though with considerable delay, to Neuchâtel. Rousseau read it with transports of delight, showed it to Lord Keith, and hurried, in ecstasy, to reply to it.

" Que ne puis-je espérer de nous voir un jour "

—so runs the conclusion of his letter—" rassemblés avec Milord dans votre commune patrie, qui deviendroit la mienne! Je bénirois, dans une société si douce, les malheurs par lesquels j'y fus conduit, et je croirois n'avoir commencé de vivre que du jour qu'elle auroit commencé. Puisse-je voir cet heureux jour plus désiré qu'espéré! Avec quel transport je m'écrierois en touchant l'heureuse terre où sont nés David Hume et le maréchal d'Écosse—

> " 'Salve, fatis mihi debita tellus!
> Hic domus, hæc patria est.'" [1]

He regrets the mistake he had made in settling at Motiers instead of going on to England. The truth is, as we learn from one of his letters to Madame de Boufflers, that he could not bear the idea of living in a town, that he feared the long journey, that his means were not sufficient to support him in England, and that he would not submit to increase them by accepting gratuities; and above all, that he feared he should not be popular with the English people, because of an ill-natured remark which he had made about them in *Emile*. The remark to which he refers is in a note in the second book—

[1] *Correspondance*, February 19, 1763; *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. vii. p. 336.

"Je sais que les Anglois vantent beaucoup leur humanité et le bon naturel de leur nation, qu'ils appellent *good natured people;* mais ils ont beau crier cela tant qu'ils peuvent, personne ne le répète après eux." [1]

But perhaps his chief reason was one which both prudence and courtesy induced him to conceal. He neither understood the English nor cared for them.[2] He says in his *Confessions* that when Madame de Verdelin urged him to write to Hume to reopen the arrangements for his reception in England—

"Comme je n'avois pas naturellement de penchant pour l'Angleterre, et que je ne voulois prendre ce parti qu'à l'extrémité, je refusais d'écrire et de promettre." [3]

And this is no doubt the real explanation of the course he took. But what he would not urge himself, Madame de Boufflers, Madame de Verdelin, and Lord Keith had been urging for him. Accordingly, at Strasburg, he received another letter from

[1] *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. i. p. 533.

[2] In the *Confessions*, Partie II. Livre XI., he says bluntly, "Je n'ai jamais aimé l'Angleterre ni les Anglois."—*Œuvres Complètes*, vol. vi. p. 132.

[3] *Confessions*, Partie II. Livre XII., *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. vi. p. 167.

Hume, offering to escort him to London, and to make arrangements for establishing him there. Hume was at this time at the height of his reputation, both socially and as a man of letters. He had just been Chargé d'Affaires d'Angleterre, the idol of the *ruelles* and *salons*, and, as a philosopher and historian, the object of a homage so fulsome and extravagant that it astonished even himself. Rousseau was not insensible of the honour of having so distinguished a chaperon ; and so, after some coquetting, he consented, under the auspices of Hume, to confer on the King of England the honour which he had intended to confer on the King of Prussia. "Tout bien pesé, je me détermine à passer en Angleterre," he wrote to Peyrou. "Vos bontés, monsieur, me pénétrent autant qu'elles m'honorent : la plus digne réponse que je puisse faire à vos offres est de les accepter, et je les accepte," he wrote to Hume ;[1] and the second week in December found him in Paris. A few hours after his arrival he was locked in the arms of Hume.

His appearance in Paris was the signal for very remarkable demonstrations. The *noblesse* at the Court, ladies and gentlemen of fashion, men of letters, *savants*, and the mob in the streets,

[1] *Correspondance.* To Hume, 4th December 1765 ; *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. viii. p. 55.

vied with one another in attempting to get access to him.

"It is impossible to express or imagine the enthusiasm of this nation in his favour," wrote Hume to Blair; "as I am supposed to have him in my custody, all the world, especially the great ladies, tease me to be introduced to him; Voltaire and everybody else are quite eclipsed by him."[1]

The awkward thing was that the *arrêt* of the Parliament had not been recalled, and, as he insisted on parading the gardens of the Luxembourg in his Armenian habit, and so attracting public attention to the fact that he was defying the law, the police warned him not to protract his visit; otherwise neither the passport of the Prince de Conti nor the precincts of the Temple would prevent his arrest.[2] He took the hint, and on the 4th[3] of January 1766 he quitted Paris with Hume and a Genevese friend, M. de Luze. At Calais they were detained by contrary winds, and it was not until the night of Saturday or Sunday, the 11th or 12th of January, or it may have been a few

[1] Burton's *Life of Hume*, ii.

[2] Grimm's *Correspondence*, Part I. vol. v. p. 124.

[3] *Ibid.*, and this date is borne out by his letters to Madame de Créqui and Madame Latour.

hours earlier, that they were able to sail. In any case, they arrived in London on Monday, the 13th.[1] The passage from Calais to Dover, which took twelve hours, was anything but an agreeable one. The sea was running high; the night was very dark, and the cold so intense that even the sailors were almost frozen to death. Hume went below, and suffered severely from sea-sickness; but Rousseau courageously remained on deck, drenched with the spray and drizzle, and chilled to the bone with the cold. At last Dover was reached, and the friends disembarked. What ensued Rousseau has himself described.

Transported by the thought that he had at last set foot on the land of liberty with so illustrious a man as his escort, he suddenly fell on the astonished Hume's neck, hugged him passionately in silence, and covered his face—"that broad unmeaning face," pea-green, no doubt, from recent affliction—with kisses and tears. This little scene over, they started for London.

It was soon known that "the celebrated M. Rousseau," as the newspapers called him, had arrived. "All the world," said the *London Magazine*, "are eager to see this man, who by his singul-

[1] *London Chronicle; Gentleman's Magazine;* Rousseau's letter to Madame de Boufflers, 18th January 1766.

arity has drawn himself into much trouble" ;[1] and in a few days he became almost as much the rage in London as he had been in Paris. The Hereditary Prince, the King's brother-in-law, called on him incognito ; the Duke of York, it would seem, called on him and missed him. General Conway, then Secretary of State, and Lady Aylesbury expressed eager desire to be introduced to him. Wilkes, who had just secretly come over from Paris to bargain with the Ministry for the terms under which he would consent to be silent, much to Rousseau's annoyance, forced himself into his cabin.[2] Garrick not only gave a supper in his honour at his house in the Adelphi, where a distinguished company was invited to meet him, but paid him the compliment of playing two characters on purpose to oblige him[3]—Lusignan, in Aaron Hill's *Zaïre,* and the triple character of the poet, Frenchman, and drunken man, in *Lethe.*[4] Rousseau's behaviour on this occasion was characteristic. Garrick had fixed Thursday, the 23rd

[1] *London Magazine*, 1st January 1766.

[2] Horace Walpole to John Chute, *Correspondence* (edit. Cunningham), vol. iv. p. 458.

[3] Cradock's *Literary and Miscellaneous Memoirs*, vol. i. pp. 205–6.

[4] Cradock says Lord Chalkstone, but this is evidently an error; Cradock's account certainly refers to this occasion.

of January, for the promised performance, and had reserved a box for him opposite to the box which the King and Queen, who were expecting to see him, would occupy. But when the time came to go to the theatre, Rousseau said that he had changed his mind and would stay at home. There was no one, he explained, to look after his dog, which, if the door happened to be opened, would run away in his absence. "Lock the door, then," said Hume, "and put the key in your pocket." This was accordingly done; but as they were going downstairs the dog began to howl. Upon that Rousseau rushed back, and said that he had not the heart to leave him in such distress. Hume insisted that as the King and Queen were looking forward to seeing him, and Mrs. Garrick had dismissed another company to make room for him, it would be absurd to disappoint them for no other reason than the impatience of a dog. Still the humane or whimsical master was not persuaded, and Hume had the greatest difficulty in inducing him to keep his engagement. It is probable that courtesy towards Mr. and Mrs. Garrick had more weight with our eccentric guest than the gratification of royal curiosity. On arriving at the theatre they found it crowded to excess, for curiosity to see him was not confined to royalty. He was suffi-

ciently conspicuous, as he wore his Armenian habit. He happened to enter his box at the very time the King and Queen entered theirs. During the whole performance it was observed that they took more notice of him than of the actors; but this perhaps was not so much a testimony of admiration as of surprise, for Rousseau appears to have behaved in a most extraordinary manner. He cried, he laughed, and became so wild with excitement that Mrs. Garrick was obliged to hold him by the skirts of his coat to prevent him falling out of the box into the pit. After the performance he went up to Garrick and said in French: "I have cried all through your tragedy and laughed through all your comedy, without being at all able to understand the language."[1] Of this scene and of the sensation Rousseau made in London we have a graphic account in a letter of Lady Sarah Bunbury to Lady Susan O'Brien, dated 5th February 1766—

"By way of news Mr. Rousseau is all the talk: all I can hear of him is that he wears a pelisse and fur cap, that he was at the play and desired to be placed so that he might see the King, which, as Mrs. Greville says, is a *pauvreté* unworthy a

[1] Cradock's *Memoirs*, vol. i. pp. 205–6; *London Chronicle* for January 23–25.

philosopher. His dressing particularly I think is very silly, and if, as the papers say, he told Garrick that he made him laugh and cry without understanding a word, this, in my humble opinion, was very silly too. . . . He sees few people, and is to go and live at a farm in Wales, where he shall see nothing but mountains and wild goats—*autre pauvreté*." [1]

Vanity is always contemptible and generally ridiculous; it was reserved for Rousseau to make it grotesque and disgusting.

IV

And now Hume's troubles began, as Horace Walpole shrewdly anticipated they soon would.[2] He had made himself responsible for the subsistence and comforts of a man on whom the eyes of all Europe were turned, but who took a perverse pleasure not only in defeating every effort which could be made on his behalf, but in placing himself and his friends in ridiculous positions. His inordinate vanity, which amounted to monomania, found its chief gratification in affecting a superiority to all those distinctions which are commonly associated with reputation and fame, and in insulting the world with the contrast between his enormous

[1] *Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*, vol. i. p. 167.

[2] To Lady Harvey, *Correspondence* (edit. Cunningham), vol. iv. p. 453.

importance in all that constitutes real eminence, and the poverty and meanness in which he affected to live. That all London should be running after a philosopher who had lodgings in St. James's, and who lived as his friend Hume lived, would have afforded him no gratification, but that all London should be running after a recluse who occupied with a dog and a mistress two squalid rooms in a farmer's cottage at Chiswick—that was quite to his taste. Hume's first negotiation was with a market-gardener at Fulham, and Diogenes himself might have been satisfied with the accommodation offered. It was a wretched cabin with only a single room to let, containing two beds, one of which was occupied by a sick person.[1] This was sufficiently picturesque, but this would hardly meet the case, as Thérèse was expected from Paris in a few days. Then Chiswick was tried, and in a farmhouse there the exile was for a while restlessly settled. Here he was joined by Thérèse, who had the honour of being escorted from Paris by Boswell, a circumstance which Boswell very judiciously did not communicate to his friend Johnson.

Of this woman and of the difficulties which her arrival occasioned Hume gives a lively account in

[1] Letter to Madame de Boufflers, 18th January 1766, *Correspondance*, *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. viii. p. 63.

a letter to Madame de Boufflers, dated London, 19th January 1766—

"This woman forms the chief encumbrance to his settlement. M. de Luze, our companion, says that she passes for wicked and tattling, and is thought to be the chief cause of his quitting Neuchâtel. He himself owns her to be so dull that she never knows in what year of the Lord she is, nor in what month of the year, nor in what day of the month or week, and that she can never learn the difference of value of the pieces of money in any country. Yet she governs him absolutely as a nurse does a child. In her absence his dog has obtained that ascendant. His affection for that creature is above all expression or conception." [1]

Rousseau's fidelity to this wretched woman is partly to be explained, as Mr. Morley suggests, by his cynical contempt for mere literary culture, social accomplishments, and social position; partly by the fact that he found repose and amusement in her passive stupidity; and partly by the sentiment engendered by long association. To his vanity also this connection administered, for it was at once a proof of his social independence and of his indifference to social distinctions. But as with Swift so with him, the *parvenu* underlay

[1] Burton's *Life of Hume*, vol. ii. p. 305.

the cynic; and he has himself recorded the "ineffable pleasure which the spectacle of Madame la Maréschale de Luxembourg publicly embracing Mademoiselle Thérèse le Vasseur" afforded him. At Chiswick, General Fitzpatrick, among others, called on him and found him in great distress at having lost his dog, which had strayed away. Hume, however, had managed to recover it, and entered the room with the dog just after Fitzpatrick arrived. Rousseau, in an ecstasy of delight, poured out his gratitude to Hume, and passionately embracing the dog, burst into tears over him.[1]

He gave poor Hume no rest. Chiswick, he said, was too near London, and he was pestered with callers and starers—which was not surprising, as the reviews and newspapers had been, and still were, full of gossip about him. The public curiosity and the public sympathy had been greatly increased by four notices in the *Monthly Review*, the *London Magazine*, and the *London Chronicle*, giving elaborate accounts of the persecution to which he had been subjected.[2] This naturally attracted the friends of liberty and toleration, then prominent through the Wilkite agitation, who

[1] Rogers' *Table Talk* (edit. Dyce), 106–7.

[2] For January (1766); for February; for 16th January and 4th February, in which there is a sketch of his life.

honoured him as a hero and pitied him as a martyr in those sacred causes. Thus conspicuous, he made himself more so by going about in his Armenian dress, and so was followed by crowds.[1] But the homage which flattered, fretted and embarrassed him. He must get away ; he must have repose ; he hated cities and crowded streets. Hearing of an old monastery in Wales, he said he would go and settle there. Wales would remind him of Switzerland, and in Wales he was sure he could live and die in peace. This fell through. Then a Mr. Stanley offered him a residence in the Isle of Wight, but the Isle of Wight was windy, had bare hills, no trees, and people who would bore him. As soon as it was known, and Hume no doubt took care that it should be known, that he was in search of a residence, several gentlemen most generously

[1] In Hardy's *Life of Lord Charlemont*, vol. i. p. 230, there is an interesting passage throwing light on Rousseau's conduct and habits at this time. "When," said Charlemont, "Hume and Rousseau arrived from France, happening to meet with Hume in the Park, I wished him joy of his pleasing connection, and particularly hinted that I was convinced he must be perfectly happy in his new friend, as their sentiments were, I believed, nearly similar. 'Why no, man,' said he, 'you are mistaken. Rousseau is not what you think him ; he has a hankering after the Bible, and indeed is little better than a Christian in a way of his own.' Excess of vanity was the madness of Rousseau. When he first arrived in London he and his Armenian dress were followed by crowds, and as long as this species of admiration lasted, he was contented and happy."

came forward and offered him apartments in their country houses. Among others a Mr. Townshend, a wealthy man, who was a great admirer of his writings, invited him to live in his house, and, to relieve him of any sense of obligation, offered to take any sum he pleased for his board. But Mr. Townshend was married, and as Rousseau made it a condition that his *gouvernante*, as Thérèse was now called, should occupy a seat at Mrs. Townshend's dinner-table, the proposal fell through.

At last a solution of the difficulty seemed at hand. He went down with Hume into Surrey, where he spent two days at the house of a Colonel Webb. He was delighted with the "natural and solitary beauties of the place," and thought and said that he could be happy there. Hume accordingly negotiated with Colonel Webb for the purchase of the house, and a small estate adjoining. And here it was hoped that Rousseau would settle at last. But he suddenly changed his mind. Though the place was fifteen miles from town, it was not, he grumbled, sufficiently out of the world and out of the range of visitors; so this fell through. And now he took it into his head that he would receive no letters. They had cost him from twenty-five to twenty-six *louis d'or* at Neuchâtel, and he would pay postage no more. Ac-

cordingly the next time Hume, to whom his letters were directed, brought a cargo of them to Chiswick, he was told to send them back to the post-office. Hume explained that if they were taken back they would be opened and read, and that all his secrets would be known, which would neither be fair to himself nor fair to his friends. He replied impatiently that he did not care. It is quite possible that Hume, seeing the inconvenience which would be likely to result from such folly, and thinking it better that he and not strangers should be acquainted with his friend's concerns, took on himself to sift the correspondence, and so gave a handle to the accusation which Rousseau afterwards brought against him.

Hume had meanwhile been endeavouring to serve him in other ways. When they were detained at Calais he had asked him whether, if it were offered, he would accept a pension from the King. He replied he should be guided entirely by what his friend Lord Keith advised. Hume, having no doubt about what Lord Keith's opinion would be, immediately after his arrival in London applied to General Conway, then Secretary of State, and General Græme, Secretary and Chamberlain to the Queen, and asked them to lay the matter before the King. Their application was successful, and it was arranged that Rousseau should have

a pension of a hundred a year, on condition that the grant of it should not be publicly known. To this condition he acceded, but the matter remained in abeyance in consequence of the illness of General Conway. A grant without such a condition would have been more gratifying, no doubt ; that such a condition should have been imposed is not surprising. The favour with which Rousseau was regarded was by no means universal. The crowd who had not read the *Nouvelle Héloïse* and the *Contrat Social* might run to stare at him ; leaders of fashion like Lady Aylesbury and Lady Kildare might cry to Hume, with gushing Mrs. Cockburn, "Oh, bring him with you ; the English are not worthy of him. Sweet old man, he shall sit beneath an oak and hear the Druids' songs ; bring dear old Rousseau." [1] But there were many, like Gray and Burke,[2] who would probably have felt

[1] *Letters of Eminent Persons*, p. 125.

[2] What Burke thought of him, he has himself very plainly stated. "We had the great professor and founder of the *philosophy of vanity* in England. As I had good opportunities of knowing his proceedings almost from day to day, he left no doubt on my mind that he entertained no principle, either to influence his heart or to guide his understanding, but vanity. With this vice he was possessed to a degree little short of madness."—"Letter to a Member of the National Assembly," *Works* (edit. Bohn), vol. ii. p. 536. Burke was well acquainted with Rousseau's writings long before he made Rousseau's acquaintance, and for what he thought of them, see *Annual Register* for 1762, p. 227.

that he never had a flash of truer intuition than when he said, in reference to his writings, "Je crains toujours que je pèche par le fond, et que tous mes systèmes ne sont que des extravagances"; and there were still more who would have echoed Johnson's sentiments, when he was asked by Boswell whether he *really* thought Rousseau a bad man: "If you mean to be serious, I think him one of the worst of men, a rascal who ought to be hunted out of society, as he has been. Three or four nations have expelled him, and it is a shame he is protected in this country;" adding, "I would sooner sign a sentence for his transportation than that of any felon who has gone from the Old Bailey these many years."[1] But Johnson, so thought Rousseau's friends, was a bigot, Gray a recluse, and even Burke had his limitations. There is an interesting passage in Madame d'Arblay's *Diary* illustrating the impression which Rousseau made on his royal benefactor—

"Mrs. Delany told several anecdotes, which had come to her immediate knowledge, of Rousseau while he was in England. . . . The King too told others which had come to his own ears, all charging him with savage pride and insolent ingratitude. . . . 'Some gratitude, sir,' said I, 'he was not

[1] Boswell's *Johnson*, edit. Croker, 1851, p. 175.

without. When my father was in Paris, which was after Rousseau had been in England, he visited him in his garret, and the first thing he showed him was your Majesty's portrait.' " [1]

But to return. Among the friends to whom Hume had spoken about his difficulties in suiting the humours of Rousseau was a Mr. Davenport, a wealthy and accomplished country gentleman, who, in addition to other residences, had a house which he seldom occupied at Wooton, near Ashbourne, in the Peak of Derbyshire. It was sixteen miles from any town, and, surrounded by rocks and forests, stood by itself on the slope of a high hill looking down on a wild and picturesque glen, and commanding an almost unbounded landscape of mountain, meadow, and woodland scenery. A little above it is the village of Wooton, about half a mile below the village of Ellaston. It had scant attractions except to lovers of nature and solitude; for a few scattered farms, a small hamlet, and here and there at wide intervals a country house, were its only immediate links with human society. The climate during the greater part of the year was heavy and humid, the weather in the winter and early spring piercingly cold; and though the

[1] *Diary and Letters*, vol. ii. p. 397.

scenery was eminently picturesque and imposing, it was somewhat sombre and austere. Rousseau was entranced with the description of the place —it was the very spot in which he desired to end his life.[1] Mr. Davenport would willingly have placed the house at his disposal and boarded him also gratuitously, and such was his intention; but Hume explained to him that such an offer would be regarded as an insult by his sensitive protégé. Rousseau's income, derived partly from contracts with his booksellers and partly from a small annuity which he had been persuaded to accept from Lord Keith, the only friend whom he had so honoured, amounted to about £80 a year, and Hume suggested that out of this he should pay for himself and his *gouvernante* £30. To this proposal Mr. Davenport good-naturedly acceded; so Rousseau and Thérèse left Chiswick for Wooton. But the evening before their departure a very remarkable scene was witnessed in Hume's lodgings in Lisle Street, including a repetition of the embarrassing demonstration on the beach at Dover. To explain this we must go back.

Some six weeks before, Hume wrote to Blair:

[1] For an elaborate description of Wooton and the neighbourhood, see Rousseau's letter to Madame de Luze, 10th May 1766; *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. viii. pp. 92, 93.

"The philosophers of Paris foretold to me that I could not conduct Rousseau to Calais without a quarrel; but I think I could live with him all my life in mutual friendship and esteem." The philosophers of Paris had more discernment than he gave them credit for, as he was soon to see. One evening at Madame Geoffrin's, not long before Rousseau and Hume left Paris, Horace Walpole was joking about Rousseau's affectations and absurdities, and especially his boasts about his importance in the eyes of great people. What fun it would be, he suggested, to concoct a flattering letter to him from the King of Prussia, inviting him to Potsdam. On his return home he set to work and sketched the letter. Next day he showed it to Helvetius and the Duc de Nivernois, who were so amused with it that, after revising some faults in the language, for it was in French, they persuaded Walpole to allow copies of it to be circulated privately among their friends.[1] In a few days it was all over Paris. "The copies," wrote Horace Walpole to Conway, "have spread like wildfire, *et me voici à la mode*."[2] It was not a

[1] Letter to Hume, 10th July 1766. As it is not very long it may be transcribed. It is printed in Burton's *Life of Hume*, vol. ii. p. 321; and in Horace Walpole's *Correspondence* (edit. Cunningham), vol. iv. p. 463, Walpole gives a full account of its concoction.

[2] *Correspondence* (edit. Cunningham), vol. iv. p. 463.

very brilliant *jeu d'esprit*,[1] but it made an extraordinary sensation, or, as Walpole put it, "an enormous noise in a city where they run and cackle after an event like a parcel of hens." The news of it soon spread to England, and in the *British Chronicle* for January 31, among the foreign news appears: "A letter is handed about Paris said to be written by the King of Prussia, but it is not well authenticated." Before this notice appeared, Hume told Rousseau of the letter, which seems at first to have made very little impression on him, as he supposed it was one of the fabrications of his old enemies at Geneva. At last he heard a

[1] "MON CHER JEAN JACQUES,—Vous avez renoncé à Genève votre patrie. Vous vous êtes fait chasser de la Suisse, pays tant vanté dans vos écrits; la France vous a décrété; venez donc chez moi. J'admire vos talent; je m'amuse de vos rêveries, qui (soit dit en passant) vous occupent trop et trop longtemps. Il faut à la fin être sage et heureux; vous avez fait assez parler de vous, par des singularités peu convenables à un véritable grand homme: démontrez à vos ennemis que vous pouvez avoir quelquefois le sens commun: cela les fâchera, sans vous faire tort. Mes états vous offrent une retraite paisible: je vous veux du bien, et je vous en ferai, si vous le trouvez bon. Mais si vous vous obstinez à rejetter mon secours, attendez-vous que je ne le dirai à personne. Si vous persistez à vous creuser l'esprit pour trouver de nouveaux malheurs, choisissez les tels que vous voudrez; je suis roi, je puis vous en procurer au gré de vos souhaits; et, ce qui sûrement ne vous arrivera pas vis-à-vis de vos ennemis, je cesserai de vous persécuter, quand vous cesserez de mettre votre gloire à l'être. Votre bon ami,

"FREDERICK."

rumour that it was Walpole who had given currency to it. Walpole, he knew, was a friend of Hume's. Upon that he asked Hume if the rumour was true; but Hume parried the question, having unfortunately a moment before given him a letter authorising Walpole to bring some important papers belonging to Rousseau from Paris. This raised Rousseau's suspicions. Could Hume have been a party to the cruel hoax; could he be in league with his persecutors? He had already been surprised to find that a son of one of the bitterest of his enemies at Geneva, the physician Tronchin, was not only on the most intimate terms with Hume, but was actually lodging with him, a circumstance which Hume had somewhat lamely explained by saying that the son was not like the father. He then remembered that many of his letters had been opened, that the newspapers had of late ceased to pay him compliments, and that he and Thérèse had been treated with marked coldness by one of the ladies in the house. He called to mind also a very extraordinary incident which had happened on the way from Paris to Calais. Hume and himself had occupied the same bedroom at an hotel. In the middle of the night he heard David crying out in his sleep, not once only, but several times, and with a vehemence

which was quite frightful: "Je tiens J. J. Rousseau! Je tiens J. J. Rousseau!" He had endeavoured to interpret the words as favourably as possible, and to laugh off, next morning, the terror they had caused him; but there could be little doubt what they meant—David had, in the English phrase, "got him," got him as a hunter gets his prey. All this was rankling in his mind when he had a last interview with Hume before setting out for Wooton. They had just finished supper. Thérèse had retired, and Hume and he were sitting in silence before the fire. During supper both Thérèse and himself had been perplexed and distressed by the way in which their host had been fixing them alternately with his eyes, and by the "diabolical expression" in them. And now that the friends were alone these stares were repeated. Rousseau tried to return them: it was impossible; he quailed under them; he nearly fainted. All his suspicions were corroborated; but no—he looked again—if the glances were those of a devil, the features were those of an honest man. He was struck with remorse; he despised himself. He rushed forward, threw himself on Hume's neck, hugged him in ecstasy, and with a face bathed in tears and a voice choked with sobs cried passionately: "Non, David Hume n'est pas un traître,

Wootton Hall.

cela n'est pas possible ; et s'il n'étoit pas le meilleur des hommes, il faudroit qu'il en fût le plus noir." The scene must have been sufficiently embarrassing to Hume, but he remained perfectly calm, politely but coldly "returned the caresses," patted his hysterical friend several times on the back, exclaiming: "Mon cher monsieur! Quoi donc, mon cher monsieur?" and without further comment retired to bed.[1]

Rousseau, with Thérèse, arrived at Wooton in the third week of March, but in a bad temper and with another grievance. Mr. Davenport, wishing to save him the expense of the journey, or rather to reduce it to a trifle, had, with delicate kindness, resorted to a little stratagem. He had chartered a return chaise, pretending that it was a public conveyance which happened by good fortune to be starting at the very time Rousseau was to leave London, which was on the 19th of March, and, to disguise his charity the more effectually, had even gone so far as to have an advertisement inserted in a newspaper announcing its departure. But by

[1] Of this absurd scene Rousseau has given four full accounts—in a letter to Madame de Boufflers, in one to Malesherbes, in the long one to Hume, and in his *Récit des Particularités de la Vie de J. J. Rousseau.* See too Hume's *Succinct Account*, but in a letter to Dr. Blair, Hume attributes Rousseau's conduct simply to his annoyance about the post-chaise.

some means Rousseau's suspicions were aroused. He challenged Hume on the subject, and accused him of conniving with Mr. Davenport in insulting him. He was not a beggar, he would live on no man's alms ; nothing, he said, could have given him greater offence.[1]

Shortly after his arrival at Wooton he wrote to Hume two most friendly letters, calling him his dear patron, and expressing his gratitude for all he had done for him.[2] But the suspicions which he had entertained of him had not been disabused, and in a letter to D'Ivernois, dated only two days after his second letter to Hume, he speaks of Hume's intimacy with Tronchin's son, of his being " très lié encore à Paris avec mes plus dangereux ennemis," of the fact that the newspapers had ceased to speak favourably of him, and that his letters had been suppressed and opened ; he shows, in fact, that all his old grievances, real or imagined, against Hume were still rankling. A week after his arrival at Wooton, he wrote to Mr. Davenport earnestly requesting that he would take care that his letters should not pass through any other hands than his own, or those of his servants, asking him to keep this request secret, and adding

[1] Letter to Peyrou, 4th October 1766.

[2] March 22 and March 29 ; *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. viii. pp. 76, 77.

that "some day when we know each other better I will tell you more about this." [1]

And now an event occurred which brought matters to a climax. On the 3rd of April the forged letter was printed both in French and English in the *St. James's Chronicle*, and two days afterwards it appeared in translation in the *British Chronicle* and in the *London Chronicle*. Rousseau was furious. He wrote off at once to the editor of the *St. James's Chronicle*, complaining of the insult done to the King of Prussia as well as to himself, pointing out that its insertion with Frederick's name attached to it was connivance with forgery, and apprising the editor that it had been fabricated in Paris; and he added: "Ce qui navre et déchire mon cœur, l'imposteur a des complices en Angleterre." [2] Rousseau's letter, with an editorial note prefixed, appeared on the 10th—

"The imposture was a very innocent one, and we do not imagine that many readers were deceived by it; we are told that it was a *jeu d'esprit* by an English gentleman now at Paris, well known in the catalogue of noble authors."

In the same paper appeared a letter to Rousseau,

[1] *Lettres Inédites*, par Streckeisen-Moultou, p. 457.
[2] *Correspondance, Œuvres Complètes*, vol. viii. p. 85.

purporting to be written by a Quaker, signing himself "Q. A."—

"Ne t'effarouche pas une bagatelle; tu es ici dans un pays de liberté; la liberté a ses inconvenients, comme vous voyez; elle s'émancipe par fois avec des caractères plus respectables que la tienne; . . . ainsi tes termes de 'navre' et 'déchire' sont un peu trop forts."

In the impression for the 3rd of May he found a defender—

"Let me recommend," says the writer, "my brother scribblers to be content with teasing one another. The Philosopher is too much above us; let us leave him unmolested in his Derbyshire retreat. It may perhaps produce something which will reflect honour on the country he lives in, and to have adopted a Rousseau will be some excuse to posterity for our own dearth of literary merit." [1]

Rousseau was now certain that his suspicions about Hume were correct. Hume was the ally of Walpole, who had circulated the letter; of D'Alem-

[1] See the numbers of the *St. James's Chronicle* under above dates.

bert, who had written it;[1] of the newspaper editors who had given currency and prominence to it. To Madame de Boufflers, to his cousin F. H. Rousseau, to Peyrou, to Malesherbes, and to other correspondents he pours out his grievances about his perfidious friend.[2] He regarded Walpole, he said, as the secret agent of three or four men who had formed a plot against him, a plot which he could not comprehend,—" mais dont je vois et sens l'exécution successive de jour en jour." These men were Hume, D'Alembert, Voltaire, and Tronchin. At this time, too, another insertion in the English newspapers, for which he considered Hume responsible,[3] added greatly to his irritation. Ever since the controversy about the theatrical performances at Geneva, Voltaire had pursued him with unrelenting hostility. *La Guerre Civile de Genève* and *L'Ingénu*, indeed, were still to come, and Voltaire's authorship of *Les Sentiments des Citoyens*

[1] "J'y reconnois à l'instant le style de M. d'Alembert . . . mon ennemi d'autant plus dangereux qu'il a soin de cacher sa haine." Letter to Malesherbes, 10th May 1766. He had not seen the notice in the *St. James's Chronicle* apparently, or perhaps he did not understand the allusion to the Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors. He afterwards said in his letter to Hume that it mattered little whether it was d'Alembert's composition or that of his *prête-nom* Walpole.

[2] See his correspondence between 9th April and 22nd May, compared with his letter to Hume dated 10th July.

[3] Letter to Hume, 10th July 1766.

Rousseau never seems to have suspected; but in 1761 appeared, under the name of the Marquis de Ximenès, the *Lettres sur La Nouvelle Héloïse*, and in 1766 the cruel and rancorous *Lettre au Docteur Pansophe*.[1] Almost as soon as this letter was published the severest passages in it were translated, and according to Rousseau aggravated in the translation, and printed in *Lloyd's Evening News*. About the same time (12th April) the *London Chronicle* printed a translation of a very severe letter of Voltaire to him, occasioned by a protest made against Rousseau's excommunication by the Council of Geneva, on the ground that the partisans of Voltaire and D'Alembert had unfairly influenced the Council. Next appeared two malicious notices, one attributing his favourable reception at Paris to the respect felt for Hume, and describing him as the son of a musician, which appears to have particularly annoyed him; and the

[1] The authorship of this Voltaire repeatedly denied, but Decroix, the collaborator of Condorcet, had no doubt that Voltaire wrote it, and Beuchot did not scruple to insert it in his edition of Voltaire's works. Internal evidence surely proves conclusively that, if Voltaire did not write the whole, he had at least a hand in it; his own denial, it is needless to say, goes for nothing. In a letter, dated November 1766, he has the impudence to say: "Il prétend que je lui ai écrit, etc.—moi, qui ne lui ai pas écrit depuis environ neuf ans"; and this after the *Sentiments* and the *Lettres sur La Nouvelle Héloïse!*"

other taunting him with "opening his door to the rich and closing it to the poor," and with "coldness to his relations." Both of these libels, for so he described them, he attributed confidently to Hume.[1] It will thus be seen that if Rousseau was wrong in supposing that Hume had had any hand in these publications, he was perfectly right when he spoke of the changed attitude of the Press towards him. The newspapers and magazines, it is needless to say, had filled their columns with all this, not because there was any prejudice against him, for journalists, like politicians, seldom either love or hate, but simply because, as gossip was busy with his name, copy retailing or adding to such gossip was acceptable.

Meanwhile Hume, quite unconscious of what was fermenting at Wooton, had been urging on the pension, when General Conway put into his hands a letter which he had received from Rousseau. This letter is not extant, and we only know its purport by a letter from Hume to Rousseau, dated 17th May, and printed by Streckeisen-Moultou, telling Rousseau how greatly both he

[1] These pieces Hume had never even read; see the *Succinct Account.* They were written by Gibbon's friend, Deyverdun, as he afterwards acknowledged to Hume, begging him to publish the fact.—Hume's *Private Correspondence*, p. 230.

himself and General Conway had been concerned at his refusal of the pension. To Hume Rousseau made no reply, but he wrote to General Conway. He was deeply touched, he said, with the favours with which it had pleased his Majesty to honour him, and with the kind services of Conway. He would not refuse the pension. So far from rejecting the benefits of the King through the pride which had been imputed to him, his pride would be in pluming himself on them ; and the only thing that pained him was that he could not honour himself as much in the eyes of the world as he could do in his own. Let those honours be deferred —deferred for happier times—and it would then be seen that he had only deferred availing himself of them that he might endeavour to make himself worthier of their reception. This was very naturally interpreted as meaning that he would not accept the pension unless it was made public. Conway was unwilling to approach the King again on the subject ; Hume, however, persuaded him to give way, and got the Duke of Richmond also to exert his influence. But there was one thing which they could not do, and that was to submit the King to the indignity of a second refusal. Accordingly, although he had received no answer to his former letter, Hume wrote again to Rousseau, telling him

what he had done, and asking him to say positively whether he would accept the pension if it were publicly granted him. Then the storm burst. A week after came the answer: "I believed that my silence, interpreted by your conscience, would have said enough—but as you will not listen to it I will speak. I know you, and you do not know it." He then went on to say that he had told him before that if he was not the best of men he was the worst, that he would have no further intercourse with him, and would accept nothing of which he was the instrument. He concluded by bidding adieu to him for ever.[1] Hume was as indignant as he was astounded. He replied at once, with a passionate vehemence very unusual with him, and, perhaps without precedent in his life, demanding an explanation: "You owe this to me; you owe it to truth and honour and justice, and to everything deemed sacred among men. Tell me what has given you offence; tell me of what I am accused. Tell me the man who accuses me." And Rousseau told him. What he told him has been already related. The key to the letter is afforded by a naïve admission at the beginning: "I know only what I feel" ("Je ne

[1] See the long letter to Hume dated 10th July 1766, *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. viii. pp. 111–127.

sais que ce que je sens"). Locke has remarked that the difference between the reasoning of a madman and that of a fool is that a fool reasons incorrectly on correct premises, and that a madman reasons correctly on absurd premises. This is just what Rousseau does here. A diseased imagination furnishes him with his data, but his logic is flawless, his conclusion inevitable. We know as a matter of fact that Hume, so far from having any part in the concoction of the forged letter, knew nothing about it till it was in circulation; that, so far from being responsible for the so-called libels in the English press, he never at any time wrote or connived at a line which could wound Rousseau's feelings, much less cast discredit on him. We know that he was not in league with Rousseau's enemies; that with Voltaire and Dr. Tronchin he had no relations at all, while his intimacy with Walpole and D'Alembert was without any reference to Rousseau; that if he did not suppress the "libels" on his friend, it was because he could not; and that if he did not explain his conduct to Rousseau, it was because he was unaware that there was anything to explain. On the other hand, it is due to Rousseau to say that there is no reason for supposing that in acting as he did he did not act in perfectly good faith. There can be

little doubt that he was convinced of the truth of what he alleged ; there can be as little doubt that he had no unworthy motive for his conduct. Madame de Boufflers said of him with perfect justice : " Ne croyez pas qu'il soit capable d'artifice, ni de mensonge, qu'il soit un imposteur ni un scélérat. Sa colère n'est pas fondée, mais elle est réelle." [1]

When we consider the effect of the course he took, the monstrous injustice done to his benefactor, the criminal ingratitude devolving on himself, it is really provoking to find in his narrative all the indications of conscientious truthfulness. There is not, it is true, an incident which he does not misread and pervert, but there is not an incident which is not, in detail, accurately stated : his facts may be practically fictions, but his fictions are substantially facts. He never resorts to falsehood or even to deliberate sophistry. Every line of the letter has the impress of sincerity, but it is the sincerity, the terrible sincerity, of monomania.

Hume knew perfectly well that the letter was intended for publication, and would be all over Europe in a few weeks. He might be forgiven for being indignant and excused for being perplexed, and his correspondence at this time shows that he

[1] *Letters of Eminent Persons*, p. 241.

was both. He wrote a very weak letter to Rousseau, complaining that Rousseau had misrepresented the "tender scene" between them on the night before the departure for Wooton, explained that the alleged diabolical expression in his eyes had simply arisen from a fixed look or stare which was usual with him when absent in thought, denied that the scene between them had reference to anything else than the post-chaise grievance, and declining to enter into any further details, concluded with reminding his former friend of the services he had done him in endeavouring to procure him a pension, and with bidding adieu to him for ever.[1] But in a letter to Dr. Blair his wrath flamed out, and we find him describing his ungrateful protégé as "the blackest and most atrocious villain that now exists in the world," adding that he was heartily ashamed of everything that he had ever written in his favour.

For the next few weeks both he and Rousseau relieved their feelings by giving their version of the affair to their common friends, but it soon became public property. A notice of the quarrel appeared early in August in the *Brussels Gazette*, and this was copied with further particulars into the English papers and magazines. At first no one could make

[1] Printed in Burton's *Life of Hume*, vol. ii. 341–2.

head or tail of the affair, and sheer perplexity held opinion in suspense. But it was not long before very decided views began to be taken, and parties to form themselves. In London and Paris nothing else was talked about, and Hume scarcely exaggerated when he said that if the King of England had declared war against the King of France it could not have been more suddenly the subject of conversation. "La rupture de M. Hume et de Jean Jacques a fait un bruit terrible ici," wrote Madame Riccoboni to Garrick. Hume had threatened, and now determined, to publish a full account of the whole matter. But his friends strongly dissuaded him from doing so, Lord Keith and Madame de Boufflers out of consideration for Rousseau, as well as for himself, Horace Walpole to prevent ridicule, Adam Smith from prudential motives, which he well explained :—

"To write against him is," he said, "you may depend upon it, the very thing he wishes you to do. He is in danger of falling into obscurity in England, and he hopes to make himself considerable by provoking an illustrious adversary. He will have a great party ; the Church, the Whigs, the Jacobites, the whole wise English nation, who will love to mortify a Scotchman, and to applaud a man who has refused a pension from the King.

It is not unlikely, too, that they may pay him very well for having refused it, and that he may have had in view this compensation." [1]

Adam Smith was then in Paris, and the advice he gave was the advice of most of Hume's French friends, the Baron d'Holbach, Turgot, Madame Riccoboni, Mademoiselle Riancour, and many others. But by the end of July opinions changed. At a general meeting of Hume's literary friends in Paris, convened by D'Alembert, it was the unanimous opinion that he ought to justify himself by publishing a full narrative.

"I find," wrote Baron d'Holbach, "that most of those who are interested in you are of opinion that you cannot dispense with a vindication; it has become necessary, because of the great number of partisans, of fanatical partisans, which Rousseau has throughout all Europe, and especially here; even now they are making capital out of your silence, and saying that it is strange that accusations so grave as you bring against Rousseau should be brought against anyone without proof. And so I am obliged to depart from my pacific counsels." [2]

[1] Printed in Burton's *Life of Hume*, vol. ii. 341–2. Letter dated 7th Oct. 1766.

[2] *Letters of Eminent Persons*, p. 261.

The truth is that Rousseau, the tone of whose correspondence on this subject was that of the very sublimity of outraged innocence, had been writing in all directions to the effect that Hume dared not publish the indictment against him, and the proofs on which it was based. But what had perhaps the most weight in inducing Hume to take the step he did was Rousseau's threatened appeal to posterity. It was known that he was writing his *Confessions*, and that it was his intention to tell the story which Hume had not the courage and honesty to tell. Hume naturally shrank from allowing his reputation to be at the mercy of the most plausible and most eloquent madman who ever lived. If it was to be gibbeted, it should at least be gibbeted to the disgrace of the gibbeter. But he held back to the very last. Finally the documents were collected and forwarded to Paris, and their publication was left to the discretion of his friends. After some hesitation they were placed in the hands of M. Suard, the author of the *Mélanges de Littérature*, who, with the assistance of D'Alembert, arranged, edited, and translated them where necessary into French, publishing them in the form of a pamphlet. So out came an *Exposé Succinct de la Contestation qui s'est élevée entre M. Hume et M. Rousseau, avec*

les pièces justificatives. This was in October.[1] Early in November appeared an English translation, superintended by Hume himself, *A Concise and Genuine Account of the Dispute between Mr. Hume and M. Rousseau, translated from the French, with the Letters that passed between them during their Controversy.* No one who reads the *Account* can doubt that Hume acted wisely in taking this step, though he afterwards regretted it. The tone is perhaps a little too acrimonious, but as nothing is asserted without documentary proof, and testimony the truth of which is self-evident, and as Rousseau's monstrous assumptions and deductions, and Hume's entire innocence of what had been imputed to him, come out as clear as fire in darkness, acrimony is, we feel, considering what was involved, perfectly excusable. Hume never forgets that he is a gentleman. He lays no undue stress on his unwearied and immense kindness to Rousseau, on his patience and forbearance under most trying provocation, or on the many services he had done him. He always expresses himself with measure and propriety. With the purely impartial reader the prevailing sentiment towards Rousseau will be rather pity than indignation, the

[1] For all this, see *Letters of Eminent Persons*, pp. 186–188 and 202 seqq.

narrative showing so unmistakably that it is recording the conduct of a man in frenzy.

Public curiosity was so great, that there was scarcely an important newspaper or magazine which did not publish the *Account* in instalments. Thus for two days, the 15th and 17th of November, it occupied four columns in the *St. James's Chronicle,* nearly the whole paper. The greater part of it was printed also in the *London Chronicle* between the 15th and 25th November. Next it appeared in the *London Magazine,* the *Gentleman's Magazine,* and the *Monthly Review.* Ingratitude is perhaps the only vice which has never found an apologist, and sympathy with Hume as well as indignation against Rousseau were all but universal. In Paris and London there were scarcely two opinions. "You can't conceive," wrote Robert Wood,[1] "how much you are put in the right and Rousseau in the wrong by every creature here." The general opinion was that Rousseau was mad, or, as Madame Riccoboni bluntly put it, "Rousseau est fou ; le succès de ses œuvres a dérangé sa tête." Such also was the opinion of Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse.[2] Hume was overwhelmed with letters of condolence and con-

[1] *Letters of Eminent Persons,* p. 264.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 208.

gratulation, and among them one from Ferney, in which Voltaire took the opportunity of giving his own sentiments on "le plus méchant coquin qui ait jamais déshonoré la littérature." [1] Hume's pamphlet led to the publication of another by Horace Walpole. But "*A Narrative of what passed relative to the Quarrel of Mr. David Hume and J. J. Rousseau,* as far as Mr. Horace Walpole was concerned in it," beyond heaping further abuse on Rousseau, and illustrating Walpole's horror of being mixed up with men of letters, is of little interest. If Rousseau's conduct was generally reprobated, he was not without supporters. His compatriot Fuseli rushed into the arena with a wild and ill-written pamphlet, defending him against what he describes as the aspersions of Mr. Hume and Monsieur Voltaire,[2] and a clergyman of the Established Church, a man of some distinction in liberal circles, Dr. Ralph Heathcote, appeared also, though with some reserve, as his apologist.[3] In France the pamphlets elicited by

[1] See the letter to Hume, 24th October 1766, and the letter to Darnaville, dated 3rd November 1766.

[2] *A Defence of M. Rousseau against the aspersions of Mr. Hume, Monsieur Voltaire, and their Associates*, long extracts from which appeared during November, both in the *St. James's Chronicle* and in the *London Chronicle.* See, too, Knowles, *Life of Fuseli*, vol. i. 44–5.

[3] "A Letter to the Honourable Horace Walpole concerning the Dispute between Mr. Hume and M. Rousseau."

the controversy were very numerous, not merely because of the interest taken in Rousseau personally, but because of the different questions and issues involved in his disgrace or vindication.[1] Nor was he without supporters in the popular press. A letter in the *St. James's Chronicle* for the 27th November, signed "An Orthodox Hospitable Old Englishman," speaks very severely of Horace Walpole's conduct, concluding with—

"M. Rousseau is a persecuted and an unfortunate stranger. I neither know him nor Hume, nor Horace Walpole, but humanity obliges me to wish that poor Rousseau may not be made uneasy here, but left in as much peace as possible."

Two other correspondents in December also take up the cudgels for Rousseau. One says he was much concerned to consider Rousseau's condition; the unhappy philosopher had come into this country to avoid the malevolence he had met with in his own, only to meet with abuse and reproaches, and abuse and reproaches which he (the writer) must take leave to say were not

[1] The most powerful pamphlet on his side was, *Précis pour M. Jean Jacques Rousseau, en réponse à l'Exposé Succinct de M. Hume.* It was anonymous.

worthy of English gentlemen.[1] In the Poet's Corner of the same paper[2] a contributor breaks out into the following exhortation :

> "Rousseau, be firm! though malice, like Voltaire,
> And superstitious pride, like D'Alembert,
> Though mad presumption Walpole's form assume,
> And base-born treachery appear like Hume,
> Yet droop not thou; these spectres gathering round,
> These night-drawn phantoms, want the power to wound.
> Fair truth shall chase th' unreal forms away,
> And reason's piercing beams restore the day;
> Britain shall snatch the exile to her breast,
> And conscious virtue soothe his soul to rest."

In the following number, however, appears a parody of these lines, reversing their sense and converting them into a satire on their subject. The press, speaking generally, was, as might be supposed, anything but favourable to him; and another correspondent in the same paper, who has, however, as little sympathy with Hume as with Rousseau, observes that there was nothing surprising in their quarrel, for they were both "deists and infidels," and what but feuds between such heretics could be expected? Nor were the wits silent. A ludicrous travesty of the indictment against Hume went the round of some of the

[1] See the letters, *St. James's Chronicle*, 11th and 13th December.

[2] 11th December.

periodicals. A facetious artist depicted Rousseau as a Yahoo newly caught in the woods, and Hume caressing and offering him some oats, which he angrily refuses, while Voltaire and D'Alembert are whipping him up behind, and Horace Walpole making him horns of *papier mâché*. A very sensible correspondent in the *London Chronicle* lamenting that there should be such dissensions between men who might with more propriety be advancing each other's interests and reputation, recommends, he says, to their serious consideration a remark of their witty friend the Abbé Troublet—

"Je me trouvai un jour dans une compagnie assez nombreuse, où étaient deux esprits et deux hommes très riches. Je dis aux premiers qui s'attaquaient l'un l'autre : 'Voyez un peu comme les deux messieurs ménagent, se flattent, se respectent, bel exemple à suivre ; ils ne donnent point de scènes aux gueux ; n'en donnez point aux sots.'" [1]

Meanwhile Rousseau's name was being brought prominently before the public in another capacity. His *Devin de Village* was translated and produced at Drury Lane Theatre on the 21st of November, and appears from the notices in the newspapers to have been very well received.

[1] *London Chronicle*, December.

V

But it is time to return to Rousseau at Wooton. He made no reply whatever to Hume's pamphlet, but he kept circulating industriously his version of the affair, in letters to Lord Keith, to Guy the bookseller, to Ray, to Peyrou, to Madame de Boufflers, to D'Ivernois, to all in fact who he thought would give currency to what he wrote, in London, Paris, Berlin, and Geneva. The burden of these letters, both before the appearance of Hume's pamphlet and afterwards, is the same. The sole course open to him is to possess his soul in patience, to endure, to submit. The league which had been formed against him was too powerful, too skilful, too zealous, had too much credit with the public, for one who had nothing else to rely on but truth, to resist. To cut off the heads of that hydra would only be to multiply them. The refutation of one of their calumnies would only be followed by the appearance of twenty others crueller still. Let Hume triumph in his infamy, let him bruit abroad what slanders he pleases; "he has filled England, France, the newspapers, all Europe, with cries for which I have no response, and with calumnies of which I should

deem myself worthy if I deigned to repel them." The one consolation to him is that Hume had at last been unmasked, and that what had long been muffled in darkness had come into the light of day. When Hume's *Account* and the anonymous reply to it from Paris—the "*Précis pour M. Jean Jacques Rousseau*"—were sent to him, he expressed the utmost indifference—

"I admire," he wrote, "the courage of the author of that work, and above all their allowing it to be circulated in London. For the rest they can do and say in my favour just what they please; for myself I have nothing to say to Mr. Hume, except that I find him too insulting for a good man, and too passionate for a philosopher." [1]

At Wooton he could enjoy to his heart's content the solitude which he so much affected. As neither he nor Thérèse could speak or understand any English, they could hold no communication except through signs transacted chiefly by Thérèse [2] with

[1] Letter to M. Laliaud, November 15, 1766, *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. viii. p. 157; and for all the other particulars see his correspondence *passim* during the summer and autumn of this year.

[2] In a letter to Hume, dated 29th March 1796, he thus expresses himself:—"J'en trouve un plus grand à ne pouvoir me faire bien entendre des domestiques, ni surtout entendre un mot de ce qu'ils disent. Heureusement Mlle. le Vasseur me sert d'interprète, et ses doigts parlent mieux que ma langue."—*Œuvres Complètes*, vol. viii. p. 77.

the housekeeper or with the servants; and this, he said—very ungratefully, for he acknowledges at first that their courteous attentions were so studious as to be almost oppressive—afforded him the greatest satisfaction. "Could I learn English," he said, "I would only speak French, especially if I had the happiness to know that they did not understand a word of it." But this had its inconveniences, and a misunderstanding between Thérèse and the venerable housekeeper about a kettle and some cinders might have led to serious consequences. Shortly after his arrival the clergyman of the place called on him, but as he would only speak in French and the clergyman would only speak English, the interview began and ended almost without the exchange of a word. At a second interview they got on better, and the reverend gentleman, it appears, took a great fancy to him. His only amusement was botanising and indulging in solitary rambles in the woods and among the rocks. "J'ai repris," he writes, "mes promenades solitaires, mais au lieu d'y rêver j'herborise, c'est une distraction dont je sens le besoin."[1] But he was not happy; his nights, he said, were cruel; he could not sleep: his body suffered even more than his

[1] To M. de Malesherbes, *Correspondance*, *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. viii. p. 101.

heart, and melancholy thoughts were his constant companions. In April, Lord Strafford invited him to his seat in Yorkshire; but fifteen leagues, he replied, were too far for a pedestrian who was hard upon sixty years of age, and a carriage was not to his taste. As the year wore on he became, if not more contented, more sociable. Mr. Bernard Granville, who had a beautiful country seat some few miles off at Calwich, made his acquaintance, and a very pleasant intimacy ensued. At Calwich, Rousseau stayed some days, and was introduced to the Duchess of Portland, who joined him on a botanical excursion on the Peak, and to whom he wrote a beautiful letter on the charms of botany.[1] He was also introduced to the 'fascinating' Miss Dewes, who insisted on becoming his physician. Mrs. Delany, Mr. Granville's sister, became quite alarmed when she perceived the favourable impression which Rousseau was making on her circle, and more especially when she heard that Lady Kildare, the daughter of the Duke of Richmond, had said that she would "offer Rousseau an elegant retreat if he would educate her children." But for all that she did not scruple to hold out "The Rousseau," as she called him, as one of the inducements to tempt Lady Andover to visit Calwich. Among

[1] *Correspondance, Œuvres Complètes*, vol. viii. p. 145–6.

others who sought his acquaintance was Erasmus Darwin the poet-botanist, who by a stratagem secured an interview with him. Knowing Rousseau's dislike to strangers, he stationed himself on a terrace where he knew the great man would pass, and affected to be examining a plant. "Are you a botanist?" he suddenly asked, as Rousseau came up. Rousseau, interested and off his guard, entered at once into conversation with him, and Darwin flattered himself that this would be the beginning of an acquaintanceship he so much desired. But the morbid solitary on reflection suspected the trick which had been played on him, and at once retired into himself, and Darwin could never again get access to him.[1]

He was now engaged in writing his *Confessions*. At what time he began them we have no means of knowing; his earliest reference to them is in a letter to Peyrou, dated 21st June of this year (1766), and he tells Lord Keith in July that they were his amusement on rainy days. "L'occupation," he writes to Keith, "pour les jours de pluie, fréquens en ce pays, est d'écrire ma vie: non ma vie extérieure comme les autres, mais ma vie réelle, celle de mon âme, l'histoire de mes

[1] *History and Topography of Ashbourne*, p. 248; and Howitt's *Visits to Remarkable Places*, p. 513.

sentiments les plus secrets."[1] So passed the summer and autumn; and if the sufferings which his enemies, or rather his own diseased mind, inflicted on him were, as they no doubt were, severe, he had apparently much to solace him.

Traditions of Rousseau long lingered at Wooton. As late as 1840, William Howitt found two of the villagers who perfectly remembered him and Thérèse, under names curiously perverted into Ross Hall and Madam Zell, or, as I have since been told, "Miss Mainselle," evidently a corruption of the French Mademoiselle. One, a very old lady, told how she and her brother used to meet him, on their way to school, poring on the park wall for mosses, or prying in some lonely nook for plants, clad in a long gown and belt, on his head a black velvet cap with gold tassels and a pendent top, and how frightened they used to be at the outlandish figure, the more terrible to them because of his taciturnity. One old man told Howitt that he had heard that Rousseau "thought nothing of going over Weaver when the *feeris* were out dancing a nights."[2] Two of his caps and a pipe which belonged to him were long preserved in

[1] *Correspondance, Œuvres Complètes*, vol. viii. p. 130.

[2] For these traditions, see Howitt's *Visits to Remarkable Places*, pp. 513, 514.

the village. Both of Howitt's informants spoke of his and Thérèse's kindness to the poor, adding that it was popularly supposed that he was some king who had been driven from his dominions, and also that he held communion with supernatural beings. Local tradition still points to some mezereons among the rocks which are said to have sprung from seeds sown by him, and a grotto near Wooton Hall is still known as Rousseau's Cave. Another of his favourite retreats was beneath a circular cluster of oaks, known locally as "The Twenty Oaks," the site of which commanded a fine prospect of most picturesque hill and woodland scenery.[1]

But Rousseau's host at Wooton was to fare as his host at London had fared before him, though happily without having any crimes imputed to him. Up to December his relations with his patron had been most friendly. His letters to him and his references to him in his other correspondence are in the highest degree complimentary and even affectionate. He is a "très galant homme, plein d'attention et de soins"—his kindnesses had only been equalled by the delicacy with which they had been conferred—"ses attentions seules m'empêchent d'oublier que je suis dans la

[1] *History and Topography of Ashbourne* (1839), p. 248.

Rousseau's Cave, Wootton Hall.

maison d'autrui." And indeed it is easy to see that Davenport was, in every sense of the term, a true English gentleman, the soul of courtesy, liberality, kindliness. But he had neglected to answer some questions which Rousseau had asked him. What they were does not appear; they seem to have had reference to some impertinences on the part of the servants. "I would as willingly put myself at the mercy of all the devils in Hell," wrote Rousseau some time before to Dutens, "as at that of English domestic servants."[1] Then, and instantly, the scene changed. A furious letter from Rousseau, demanding to know on what footing he stood at Wooton, and threatening that if he was not informed immediately he should leave the house, was the result.[2] And the letter was the more offensive as it reminded his host that he had not sought his hospitality—it had been practically forced on him. Mr. Davenport appears to have sent a satisfactory reply, for the storm blew over, and the spring of 1767 found the philosopher still at Wooton on good terms with his host, and in love with an idle and contemplative life, which became each day more delicious to him.[3]

[1] To Dutens, *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. viii. p. 189.
[2] To Davenport, Dec. 22, 1766, *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. viii. p. 160.
[3] Letter to the Marquis de Mirabeau, 31st January 1767.

In March, much to the surprise of General Conway, he applied through Mr. Davenport for the pension which he reminded him had been promised. The result is greatly to Hume's credit, for the application which it was now necessary to make to the King depended on his decision. The King, after what had passed, was not disposed to regard Rousseau with much favour, but as the pension had been promised it should be granted, he said, and Rousseau, little thinking what he owed to his good-natured enemy, characteristically acknowledged it. He accepted it, he writes to Conway, as "les arrhes d'une époque heureuse autant qu'honorable, qui m'assure, sous la protection de sa majesté, des jours désormais paisibles." This was on the 26th of March. On the 2nd of April he was writing to Peyrou in a strain which shows unmistakably that his mind was unhinged, and from this moment insanity, or something indistinguishable from insanity, marks his correspondence and his actions. It seems that a letter addressed to him by Peyrou had fallen by mistake into the hands of his cousin, F. H. Rousseau, and had, very naturally, been returned to him after being opened. His cousin he believed to be an ally of Hume, and he flew to the conclusion that Hume and Hume's friends were again tamper-

ing with his letters. He tells Peyrou that he has been entrapped on all sides: that spies have been set to watch him for the purpose of stealing his papers, presumably the manuscript of the *Confessions*. "O destiny, O my friend," he cries, "pray for me. I have not merited the misfortunes which are crushing me." If he is not rescued and things come to the worst, it will only remain for him to burn all his papers, and that he will do rather than that they should fall into the hands of his enemies. Some friend must come to him—letters are vain, because all letters are intercepted between Wooton and London.[1] On the 30th of April he wrote to Mr. Davenport, telling him that next day he intended to quit Wooton for ever.

"I shall leave," he said, "my small belongings, as well as those of Mademoiselle le Vasseur, and I shall leave also the proceeds of the sale of my engravings and books, as security for the debt incurred by me since Christmas. I am not ignorant of the snares which threaten me, nor of my powerlessness in protecting myself from them. It only remains for me to finish with courage a career passed with honour. It is easy to oppress me, but difficult to degrade me."

[1] See the two letters to Peyrou dated 2nd and 4th of April, *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. viii. pp. 191–2 and 193–4.

He thanked him for the "noble hospitalité" which he had shown him, and concluded by saying that he should often regret the retreat which he was quitting, but he should regret still more the fact that he had not succeeded in making so agreeable a host a friend.[1]

The sole reason assigned by him for this abrupt departure was that Mr. Davenport had forgotten some promise which he had made him, and had left the house without ascertaining, what he probably knew, that his guest was comfortable. The next day, 1st May, he and Thérèse departed, without a word to anyone, leaving their trunks packed, with the keys dangling at the locks, between £20 and £30 in Mr. Davenport's possession, and no directions as to what was to be done with either the trunks or the money, or any address. Mr. Davenport, in amazement, did not know what to do. Supposing, however, that he had gone to London, he sent on some papers to him to an address there, but learned to his further perplexity that nothing had been heard of him. More than a fortnight passed without any news of the fugitives. The *London Chronicle* recorded his flight from Wooton, and conjectured that, as it was known that he had taken the road to London, he was probably concealed in or near

[1] To Davenport, *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. viii. p. 196.

there, commenting severely at the same time on his ingratitude to his English friends.[1] At last, on 17th May, Mr. Davenport received a letter from him dated May 11th,[2] at Spalding, in Lincolnshire, apologising for his unceremonious departure from Wooton, and expressing his readiness to go back there if Mr. Davenport would receive him and facilitate his return.

"I preferred," he said, "liberty to a residence at your house. But I infinitely prefer a residence at your house to any other kind of captivity, and I prefer every kind of captivity to that in which I am, which is horrible, and which, come what may, cannot be endured."

On the receipt of this letter, Mr. Davenport immediately despatched a servant to Spalding, assuring his troublesome correspondent of his continued protection; but the man learned on arriving that Rousseau had started for Dover four days before.

But this was not the only letter he wrote from Spalding. He sent a petition to the Lord Chancellor, Lord Camden, telling him that he had been seduced into England by a promise of hospitality, but that he had met with the worst usage, that he

[1] *London Chronicle*, 12th May.
[2] Burton's *Life of Hume*, vol. ii. p. 369.

was in danger of his life from the plots of his enemies, and that he prayed, therefore, that the Lord Chancellor would, as the first civil magistrate of the kingdom, appoint a guard to conduct him safely out of the kingdom, the expense of which guard he would himself defray. Lord Camden, who replied through his secretary, merely observed that he was mistaken in the nature of the country, for that the first post-boy he could apply to was as safe a guide as the Chancellor could appoint.[1] In the same strain he wrote to General Conway, claiming the protection of the King, and desiring that a party of cavalry might be immediately ordered to escort him to Dover. To this Conway replied by assuring him that postilions were a very sufficient guard throughout every part of the King's dominions.[2] At Spalding he resided at the White Hart Inn, and it is curious to find that a writer in such panic as this letter implies was making himself exceedingly agreeable to the clergyman of the place, the Rev. John Dinham,

[1] Burton's *Life of Hume*, vol. ii. p. 375. The letter to Lord Camden seems to have been published, for Gray had read it. Gray to the Rev. James Brown, 6th June 1767.

[2] I give this on the authority of Hardy's *Life of Lord Charlemont*, vol. i. p. 231. Charlemont says that General Conway showed him both Rousseau's letter and his own reply. If this be correct, Rousseau must have written twice to General Conway from Spalding.

with whom he passed several hours each day, and who found him "cheerful, good-humoured, easy, and enjoying himself perfectly well, without the least fear or complaint of any kind." [1] Another inhabitant of Spalding, a Mr. Edmund Jessop, then practising as a surgeon there, desired to make his acquaintance. He accordingly sent a note to him in Latin to the effect that he should be glad to converse with him on the subject of one of his late publications, which, though condemned by many, had merited, in Mr. Jessop's opinion, the greatest approbation; and Mr. Jessop appears to have given the rein to compliment. Rousseau's reply could not have encouraged his correspondent to press further attentions on him.

"You address me as a literary man, sir, in a literary language, on subjects of literature. You load me with eulogies so pompous that they are ironical, and you think to intoxicate me with such incense. You are mistaken, sir, on all these points. I am not a man of letters. I was so once, to my misfortune, but I have long since ceased to be so. Nothing relative to that profession suits me now. Excessive eulogy has

[1] This was communicated to Hume by a Mr. Fitzherbert, who had it from the clergyman himself. See Burton's *Hume*, vol. ii. p. 375. For the names of the inn, the clergyman, and the doctor I am indebted to the courtesy of Dr. Martin Perry of Spalding.

never flattered me. At the present moment, especially, I have more need of consolation than incense. . . . My errors may be great, my sentiments ought to have been an atonement for them. I believe there have been many points on which people have not desired to understand me. You style yourself a surgeon. If you had spoken to me of botany, and of the plants which your country produces, you would have given me pleasure, and I should have been able to discourse with you on that ; but as for my books, and of every other sort of books, you would speak to me in vain, because I no longer take any interest in matters of that kind. I do not reply to you in Latin, for the reason already assigned. I have no more of that language now left me than just as much as is necessary to understand Linnæus' phrases." [1]

His object in seeking refuge in so remote a place as Spalding was evidently to elude the pursuit of his fancied enemies ; this is therefore another proof of the genuineness of his fears. It was probably want of money which induced him to press on to Dover, for, having received no reply

[1] For this incident, as well as the letter, see *London Magazine* for August 1767, pp. 418, 419, where it is printed, as here given, in English. The letter, presumably retranslated, is given in French in Rousseau's *Œuvres Complètes*, Paris, 1825. It is dated 10th May, which is quite right, though the editor, not knowing the circumstances, says that it should be 10th April. In Rousseau's *Œuvres Complètes*, Paris, 1817 (vol. viii. p. 407), the letter is dated 13th May.

to his letter to Mr. Davenport, he concluded, as he informed Mr. Davenport in a letter written on the day he left Spalding, that a return to Wooton would not be allowed. His money had run so short that he was reduced to the necessity of breaking up a silver spoon or fork which he happened to have with him to defray his expenses at the inns on the road.[1] He travelled with such expedition that the journey from Spalding to Dover, a distance of some two hundred miles, only occupied two days.

On arriving at Dover he found that the wind was contrary. This drove him nearly frantic. He interpreted it as part of a plot, and an "order from superior authority"—meaning presumably Providence—to retard his departure, with the view of gratifying the designs of his enemies. Though he could not speak English, he mounted on an eminence and

[1] He communicated this fact to his friend Corancez. See Corancez's account of Rousseau, contributed to the *Journal de Paris*, numbers 251, 256, 258, 259, 260, 261, and reprinted in the *Bibliothèque des Mémoires relatifs à l'Histoire de France pendant le XVIII^e Siècle*, pp. 58–69. The English translation of this appeared in 1798 with the following title-page, *Anecdotes of the last Twelve Years of J. J. Rousseau. Originally published in the Journal de Paris by Citizen Corancez, one of the Editors of that Paper, translated from the French.* It was written in answer to a book entitled *De mes rapports avec J. J. Rousseau et de nôtre correspondance*, par J. Dussaulx. Dussaulx was an enemy of Rousseau, and his object was detraction.

harangued the astonished people, who could understand neither his conduct nor his words. This, he afterwards acknowledged to Corancez, was a "real fit of madness." [1] But it seems that he was under the impression that the Duc de Choiseul, then Prime Minister in France, was in league with his enemies in England, and intended to have him arrested. Under the influence of this utterly groundless panic he wrote — and an extraordinary letter it was—again to General Conway. He begins by imploring Conway to listen attentively to him and to weigh carefully what he was going to say. He could not understand, he said, with what object he had been brought to England—some object there was, that was certain. Considering his insignificance it could hardly have been a State affair ("une affaire d'état"); such a supposition was so inexplicable as to be simply incredible; and yet the plot against him, the alliance of the most estimable and distinguished men in the kingdom, nay, the whole kingdom itself, with a single individual, desiring to humiliate another individual, was if possible still more inexplicable. But it was a fact, and he must face it. Conway's mind, he makes no doubt, had been poisoned

[1] For the whole of this see Corancez, English translation, pp. 68–69.

against him; still he was not without hope that an appeal to his reason might have some effect. To assist him to leave England in safety would be at least a prudent action, for if he was privately made away with or kidnapped he was so well known that inquiries were sure to be made into his disappearance, and the whole thing would some day come out. One of the objects of the conspiracy against him was undoubtedly to prevent him writing the memoirs in which, as was well known, it was his intention to tell the truth about his treatment in England. But he would engage not to write them; he would bind himself by the most solemn ties to refrain from either putting on paper or speaking a single defamatory or disrespectful word about England or about any man in England; he would never mention even Hume's name, or if he did he would speak of him with honour. As a guarantee and earnest of his promises he would at once place in Conway's hands all his papers relative to England, and he would write him a letter placing on record the whole of what he had agreed to. As an additional guarantee he would retain the pension which the King had conferred on him, and so bind himself by indissoluble ties to the sacred claims of gratitude to the King and to the country that have made

him their debtor. Thus far he had addressed himself to Conway's reason—he would conclude with a word addressed to his heart. He had before him a miserable man reduced to despair, awaiting only the manner of his death. He could recall that poor wretch to life ; he could be his saviour ; he could make the most unfortunate of men a happy man once more.[1]

At Dover he wrote also to Mr. Davenport, telling him that when he beheld the sea and realised that he was indeed a free man, he resolved to return to Wooton ; but he was diverted from that intention by seeing in one of the English newspapers some severe remarks on the way in which he had treated his host ; he refers, no doubt, to the paragraph in the *London Chronicle* of the 12th of May.[2] This decided him to quit England. On the 21st or 22nd of May he was at Calais, and England knew him no more.

There was much speculation about his motives for acting as he had done in quitting Wooton, and in writing to the Lord Chancellor and to General Conway. It is not at all improbable that the

[1] Letter to General Conway, dated Dover (*Œuvres Complètes*, vol. viii. pp. 196–200). It is not improbable that it was written at Spalding, and perhaps posted at Dover.

[2] See *London Chronicle* for that date.

wretched woman who was his companion was responsible at least for the first step. "C'était une méchante femme, qui a causé beaucoup de chagrins à Rousseau," says one who knew her well.[1] She must have found the life at Wooton intolerably dull. So stupid that she could not learn English, she had no other companion than Rousseau, of whom she probably saw comparatively little, for he loved solitude and meditation ;[2] she does not appear to have accompanied him in his long daily walks, nor to have gone with him into such society as they had. He rarely refers to her in his correspondence. We know that she was not on good terms either with Mr. Davenport's housekeeper or with the servants. It was natural that she should wish to get back to her own country and to more congenial surroundings, and it is difficult to see how she could do so except by making Rousseau discontented with England. Dullard and simpleton though she was, she had him completely under her influence, and probably conjured up the phantoms which drove him mad, partly perhaps to amuse herself, and partly for the

[1] See *Mémoires de Mons. Girardin*, vol. i. pp. 19–37 ; but see also the *Memoirs and Correspondence of Sir James E. Smith*, vol. i. pp. 180–81, where a more favourable account is given of her.

[2] He tells us that when he was busy with his works whole weeks passed without any conversation with her (*Confessions*, xii. 188).

practical purpose referred to. Some attributed his conduct to pure calculation, and saw no madness in it at all. His desire, they thought, was to get himself talked about, to advertise himself, as Sterne and Foote were doing, by his eccentricities. This was the opinion of Adam Smith and of Gibbon. Gibbon puts that view very emphatically.[1] "He withdrew to the heart of a desert, where he was allowed to vegetate so peacefully that he was compelled to quarrel with all our men of letters in order to become notorious," his flight from Wooton and his letters to Lord Camden and General Conway being moves in the same game. "Mes sentimens pour lui," wrote D'Alembert, "n'en recevront aucun changement : je le regarde comme un fou très dangereux, dont tout le mérite se borne a une belle *loquèle* et à une fort mauvaise logique." [2]

The conclusion to which Hume came was that he was "a composition of whim, affectation, wickedness, vanity, and inquietude, with a very small, if any, ingredient of madness." This is probably much nearer the truth than the other view. Men tempered as Rousseau so obviously was seldom calculate their actions, and are rarely guided in

[1] See letter of Gibbon published by General Meredith Read in his *Historic Studies,* vol. ii. p. 360.

[2] *Letters of Eminent Persons*, p. 210.

any action by any one motive. It is certainly not easy to understand how a man could conduct himself as Rousseau appears to have done at Spalding, and be at the same time in such a distempered state of mind as his letter to General Conway indicates. It is equally difficult to reconcile the lucidity, precision, and method apparent in the expression and arrangement of all he writes, with the coexistence of hallucinations so monstrous and baseless as to be absolutely incompatible with sanity. The problem would be solved if we accepted the hypothesis of Gibbon and Adam Smith, and a cunning and despicable knave, black with ingratitude and treachery, would take the place of a madman. But no one who studies his correspondence, and particularly the letters to Peyrou, can doubt his sincerity. The truth is that, like Tasso and Cowper, he was the subject of a malady which can hardly be called insanity, because it leaves so many functions un-deranged and so many faculties unimpaired, but which exhibits itself in a peculiar form of monomania. In Mr. Morley's admirable analysis of Rousseau's temperament and character, he notes that the chief feature was the exaltation of emotion over intelligence, and observes that the tendency of the dominant side of a character to diseased exaggeration is a fact of

daily experience. This is the key to Rousseau's peculiarities. Inordinate self-consciousness and inordinate vanity became at last exalted into mania. He imagined that the eyes of the whole world were upon him, or ought to be upon him ; he became the centre of all he thought and of all he felt. He seems to have supposed, said the author of the *Letter to Horace Walpole*, " that as soon as he arrived at Dover the English should have been affected as they were at the Restoration on the landing of the Prince of Orange." He was a proscribed exile in a country the language of which he could not understand, to the manners and ways of which he was an entire stranger. He grew suspicious of what he could not comprehend, and suspicion soon hardened into distrust. He thought it probable that Hume was jealous of him, and this became the nucleus of his morbid fancies. His sensitive pride, galled at the thought of dependence and on the watch for everything which could be construed into a slight ; his constitutional timidity, always on the rack of expectation, as he knew, and knew truly, that he had many enemies ; the hospitable reception given in the newspapers to Voltaire's libels ; his solitary life, passed with a companion who, there can be little doubt, encouraged him in his delusions, and perhaps aggravated

them—all this amply accounts for his outrageous conduct, without our having recourse to meaner motives for an explanation. When he said, as he did to Peyrou, that the design of Hume and his associates was to cut off all his resources, all his communications with the Continent, and make him perish in distress and misery, it is impossible to doubt that he said what he firmly believed. Mr. Morley has well observed that Rousseau was at bottom a character "as essentially sincere, truthful, careful of fact and reality, as is consistent with the general empire of sensation over untrained intelligence."[1] He said of himself, with simple truth—

"Je me rends le témoignage que pendant quinze ans, que j'ai eu le malheur d'exercer le triste métier d'homme de lettres, je n'ai contracté aucun des vices de cet état ; l'envie, la jalousie, l'esprit d'intrigue et de charlatanerie n'ont pas un instant approché de mon cœur."[2]

A more exasperating guest has never shared the hospitality of England, but the descendants of the hosts of Rousseau have no reason to be ashamed of

[1] *Rousseau*, vol. ii. p. 302.

[2] No one can doubt the correctness and honesty of Rousseau's painfully elaborate analysis of his own temperament and character both in the *Dialogues* and in the *Rêveries*. See particularly the Fourth of the *Rêveries*.

their ancestors. All who could entertain or in any way serve him seem to have vied with one another in pressing their civilities and attentions upon him. He was, he says, embarrassed by the kindness with which he was treated. To study his comforts, to gratify and if possible to anticipate his wishes was, he tells us, the pleasure of everyone. As soon as it was known that he desired a retreat in the country, several private residences were at once placed gratuitously at his disposal. The prudery of English society was relaxed in his favour, and a transparent fiction was accepted that he might be spared the annoyance of seeing his sordid paramour neglected or slighted. Never has the character of an English gentleman been more strikingly illustrated than in the conduct of Mr. Davenport. No provocation could make him forget the relation in which he stood to one whom he had accepted as a guest. Frank, thoughtful, and urbane, his kindness and generosity were only equalled by the tact and grace with which his favours were conferred. "It is only by the attentions I receive," wrote Rousseau to Madame de Boufflers, "that I know I am in another's house." And from first to last it was the same. Davenport's only reply to the letter in which his troublesome and ungrateful guest so abruptly and rudely bade

adieu to him was, on the first intimation of his desire to return, to send a servant after him assuring him of his continued protection and goodwill. Of Hume's goodness to him enough has been said, but it may be added that, after the provocation he had received, he was not only, as we have seen, instrumental in obtaining the pension for him, but on Rousseau's return to France he exercised all the influence in his power to protect him from the vengeance of the Parlement de Paris, and to secure him a safe asylum.[1]

It is curious to compare the way in which Voltaire and Rousseau employed their time in England, and the impression which their residence here made upon them. In a few months Voltaire could both read and speak English with perfect fluency. He studied our manners, our customs, our police, our laws, our constitution, our politics, our religion and religious sects, our divinity, our philosophy, our science. He made himself a perfect master of our literature, and of our liter-

[1] A circumstance so honourable to Hume should be emphasised. It is recorded in a letter from Turgot to Hume, 1st June 1767. *Letters of Eminent Persons*, p. 159. One sentence deserves quoting: "Il n'y a que l'intérêt même que vous prenez, et la singularité de cette circonstance, qui puisse peut-être adoucir le Roi sur le compte de Rousseau, en faisant demander la chose en votre nom par M. Choiseul."

ature in all its branches. He prided himself, and not without justice, on his English composition both in verse and prose. He entered heartily into every movement of the time. He was a member of the Royal Society. He made his way into every circle, and into every coffee-house and club in London. He left us with the highest respect, affection, and admiration, and the whole of his future life was coloured by his association with us. There is, it must be owned, a great difference between a man of twenty-five and thirty and a man between fifty and sixty. But the apathy and indifference of Rousseau to all that related to the asylum of his exile can hardly be attributable to years. He made one attempt to learn the language, by comparing an English translation with the French text of his own *Emilius*, but soon abandoned the task in disgust, as he could not bear to be reminded, he said, of his own writings. The net result of his study of English was the acquisition of thirty words, and those he forgot at Wooton—"tant leur terrible baragouin," so he described the language of Shakespeare and Milton, "est indéchiffrable à mon oreille." His references to our literature in his letters at this time begin and end with a single passage about Richardson.[1] He is

[1] Letter to Peyrou, 21st June 1766.

silent about the interesting men whom he must have met ; about public events ; about the country ; about everything which would naturally engage the attention of a visitor and traveller. Nothing can be more wearisome than his correspondence, which is occupied almost entirely with the discussion of his grievances, and of himself. It has not, except occasionally, even that charm of style which is inseparable from his characteristic writings. It is the reflection of a man who has, to employ a forcible and popular phrase, "gone all to pieces." It gives us the key to the character of which Wright's portrait is the silent interpreter. It would seem that, from the moment he set foot on English soil, the Nemesis which seldom fails in the long run to attend the profligate subjection of the reasonable to the emotional nature, began to pursue its disastrous course. The generous enthusiast of *Emile* and the *Social Contract,* the vigorous and masculine controversialist of the *Letter to Beaumont* and the *Letters from the Mountain,* disappears in a morbid, hysterical and sentimental egotist, and indeed in something worse, in one of the most pitiable illustrations of the Aristotelian Acolast to be found in the records of men of genius.

The influence exercised by English writers on Rousseau was, though perhaps exaggerated by

Texte,[1] no doubt considerable, but it affected him rather indirectly than directly, always through the medium of translation and long before his visit to us. The *Nouvelle Héloïse* unquestionably owed much, as well in its form as in its sentiment, to Richardson's masterpiece; while almost all the elements entering into its composition could be resolved into elements distinctly traceable to what was finding expression both in our poetry and in our prose fiction between about 1740 and 1770. The extravagance and eloquence of the *Contrat Social* are all his own, but some of its central ideas were derived from Hobbes, Algernon Sidney, and Locke. *Emile* owes at least its foundations and much of its substance to Locke's educational treatise, which had been translated into French as early as 1695; while to a French version of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the fourth, fifth, and ninth books, the sentimental portions are largely indebted. How greatly he profited from the perusal of a French translation of the *Spectator* he has himself recorded in the third book of the First Part of the *Confessions*, and the perusal of the *Spectator* he recommends in *Emile* as of great educational value to young women. To *Robinson Crusoe* he assigns the

[1] See Joseph Texte's *Jean-Jacques Rousseau et les Origines du Cosmopolitisme Littéraire.*

first place among books of instruction for the young, and has more than once spoken of it in extravagant terms; on *Emile* its influence is plainly discernible. Pope's *Essay on Man* was a great favourite with him. "Le poème de Pope adoucit mes maux et me porte à la patience," he says in a letter to Voltaire, where he discusses its philosophy.[1]

But Rousseau was never a great reader. Much which may be attributed to English influence came, no doubt, filtered through other sources, or belonged to the atmosphere created by that *anglomanie* which, initiated by Voltaire and Béat Ludvig Von Muralt, had been accentuated by Montesquieu, by the Abbé Prévost, and by a long succession of translators. Everything, indeed, of importance which in and after our Augustan age had appeared in English literature had received a French dress, and was in that form more or less influential wherever French was spoken. What, therefore, Rousseau owed to England, he owed to it long before he set foot on our shores.

[1] *Correspondance; Œuvres Complètes*, vol. vii. p. 35.

APPENDIX

A

To Dr. Towne.

Nov. the 14th [No year],
PARSONS GREEN.

SR.—Your friend Capt. Kingstone returning to Barbadoes, I take this occasion of assuring you of the satisfaction it was to me to be informed by him of yr. good health, and of the kind reception you met with from everybody there. If I were inclined to envy you anything which cld. give you pleasure, it should be the enjoyment of that charming sun — which we so seldome see here, and which has been more cruell this winter than usually by almost a continuall absence.

Mrs. Robinson going (*sic*) to write to you very lamenting she had no news to tell you. However ill-informed of the affairs of this world, and how they are like to goe, you may be assured you know as much as the Plenipotentiary at Soisson, perhaps as much as our ministers here, and all the discovery that we lookers on can make is that one week they doubt, and one week they hope. The city of London follow their example, and this happens at Exchange Alley to be the doubting

week. It is as hard to account for our politics as for Mr. Voltaire's resolutions and conduct; the country and people of England are in disgrace at present, and [he] has taken his leave of us, as of a foolish people who believe in God and trust in ministers; and he is gone to Constantinople in order to believe in the Gospels, which he says it is impossible to doe living among the teachers of Christianity.

He was mightily pleased with your translation of part of the book. We all wish you had Leasure to doe the whole. Mr. Pope approved it so much that he assured me he would look it over with the utmost care if you proceeded and ever intended to publish it.

After repeated assurances from great men that a war wd. be avoided, and that we shld. have peace in some shape or other, it is now very probable they will find themselves mistaken. letters of mark are given to great Dutch and English East India men to take the Ostend ships beyond the Cape of Good Hope, and the soldiers are in full expectation of imployment.

I wish we doe not repent the oportunities we have lost and the time we have given our enemies,—I am,

Sr., Your most affectionate humble servant,

PETERBOROW.

Endorsed

Ld. Peterburrow.

B

Sr.—I wish you good health, a quick sale of yr. burgundy, much latin and greek to one of yr. children, much law, much of Cooke and Littleton, to the other, quiet and joy to Mistress Brinsden, money to all. When you'll drink yr. Burgundy with Mr. Furneze pray tell him I'll never forget his fauours. But dear John, be so kind as to let me know how does my Lady Bullingbrooke. As to my lord, I left him so well I don't doubt he is so still. But I am very uneasie about my lady. If she might have as much health as she has spiritt and witt, sure she would be the strongest body in England. Pray dear Sr. write me something of her, of my lord and of you. Direct yr. letter by the penny post at Mr. Cavalier, Belitery Square by the R. Exchange. I am sincerely and heartily yr. most humble, most obedient rambling friend,

Voltaire.

(Historical MSS. Commission, Appendix to Ninth Report, p. 475.)

C

A Londres le 3 *Mars,*
1727.

Monsieur,—Le S. de Voltaire, que vous m'avez fait l'honneur de me recommander et pour lequel

vous m'avez addressé des lettres de recommandation pour les ministres de cette cour, est prest à faire imprimer à Londres, par souscription son poème de la Ligue. Il me sollicite de lui procurer des souscrivants, et M. de Walpole s'employe de son côté tout de son mieux pour tâcher de luy en faire avoir le plus grand nombre qu'il sera possible ; je serois très aise de luy faire plaisir, mais comme je n'ay point veu cet ouvrage, et que je ne sais point si les additions et soustractions qu'il dit avoir fait à celui qu'il a donné au public à Paris, ni les planches gravées qu'il en a fait venir pour l'enrichir seront approuvées de la Cour, je luy ay dit que je ne pouvois m'en mesler qu' autant que vous l'auriez pour agréable. Je crains toujours que des auteurs françois ne veuillent faire un mauvais usage de la liberté qu'ils ont dans un pays comme celuy-cy d'écrire tout ce qui leur vient dans l'imagination sur la Religion, le Pape, le Gouvernement, ou les personnes qui le composent. Ce sont des licences que les poètes particulièrement se croyent toujours en droit de se donner, sans s'embarrasser de prophaner ce qu'il y a de plus sacré. Et s'il se trouvoit quelque chose de pareil dans ce poème, je ne voudrois pas être dans le cas d'essuyer le reproche que j'y aurois souscrit et engagé des gens à y souscrire. Je vous supplie très humblement, Monsieur, de vouloir bien me mander la conduite que je dois tenir à ce sujet ; je me conformeroy à ce que vous me feres l'honneur de me prescrire.

J'ay celuy d'être, avec un très sincère et très parfait attachement,

Monsieur,

Votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur,

BROGLIE.

D

This letter is written on two sheets of quarto paper, yellow with age, and begins only with p. 4. The original ink is faded and brown, but many corrections seem from their comparative blackness to be of later date. The letter terminates abruptly at p. 9, and was perhaps, as its present owner, Mr. Forbes Sieveking, conjectures, recopied by Voltaire before being despatched to Theriot.

. . . . . .

the best poet of England, and at present, of all the world. j hope you are acquainted enough with the English tongue, to be sensible of all the charms of his works. for my part j look on his poem call'd the essay upon criticism, as superior to the art of poetry of horace ; and his rape of the lock *la boucle de cheveux* [that is a comical one], is in my opinion above the lutrin of *despreaux*. j never saw so amiable an imagination, so gentle graces, so great varyety, so much wit, and so refined knowledge of the world, as in this little performance.

now my dear Tiriot, after having fully answered to what you asked about English books, let me acquaint you with an account of my for ever cursed fortune. j came again into England in

the latter end of july very much dissatisfied with my secret voiage into France both unsuccesful and expensive. j had about me onely some bills of exchange upon a jew called *Medina* for the sum of about eight or nine thousand french livres, reckoning all. at my coming to london i found my damned jew was broken. j was without a penny, sick to death of a violent agüe, a stranger, alone, helpless, in the midst of a city, wherein j was known to nobody. my lord and my lady bolingbroke were in the country. j could not make bold to see our ambassadour in so wretched a condition. j had never undergone such distress ; but j am born to run through all the misfortunes of life. in these circumstances, my star, that among all its direful influences pours allways on me some kind refreshment, sent to me an english gentlemen unknown to me, who forced me to receive some money that j wanted. an other London citizen that j had seen but once at paris, carried me to his own country house, wherein j lead an obscure and charming life since that time, without going to london, and quite given over to the pleasures of indolence and of friendship. the true and generous affection of this man who sooths the bitterness of my life brings me to love you more and more. all the instances of friendshipp indear my friend Tiriot to me. j have seen often mylord and mylady Bolinbroke. j have found their affection still the same, even increased in proportion to my unhappiness. they offered me all,

their money, their house; but j refused all, because they are lords, and j have accepted all from Mr. faulknear, because he is a single gentleman.

j had a mind at first to print our Poor Henry at my own expenses in london, but the loss of my money is a sad stop to my design: j question if j shall try the way of subscriptions by the favour of the court. j am weary of courts, my thiriot. all that is King, or belongs to a king, frights my republican philosophy, j won't drink the least draught of slavery in the land of liberty.

j have written freely to the abbot desfontaines it is true, and j will allwais do so, having no reason to lay myself under any restraint. j fear, j hope nothing from your country. all that j wish for, is to see you one day in london. j am entertaining myself with this pleasant hope. if it is but a dream, let me enjoy it, don't undeceive me, let me believe j shall have the pleasure to see you in london, [drawing up] the strong spirit of this unaccountable nation. you will translate their thoughts better, when you live among em. you will see a nation fond of her liberty, learned, witty, despising life and death, a nation of philosophers, not but that there are some fools in england, every country has it madmen. it may be, french folly is pleasanter than english madness, but, by god, english wisdom and English Honesty is above yours. one day j will acquaint you with the character of this strange people, but tis time to put an end to my english talkativeness. i fear, you will take

this long epistle for one of those tedious english books that j have advised you not to translate. before j make up my letter, j must acquaint you with the reason of receiving yours so late. t'is the fault of my correspondent at Calais master *dunoquet.* so you must write to me afterwards, *at my lord bolingbroke's House, london.* this way is shorter and surer. tell all who will write to me that they ought to make use of this superscription.

j have written so much about the death of my sister to those who had writ to me on this account, that i had almost forgotten to speak to you of her. j have nothing to tell you on that accident but that you know my heart and my way of thinking. j have wept for her death, and I would be with her. Life is but a dream full of starts of folly, and of fancied, and true miseries. death awakes us from this painful dream, and gives us, either a better existence or no existence at all. farewell. write often to me. depend upon my exactness in answering you when j shall be fixed in london.

Write me some lines in english to show your improvement in your learning.

j have received the letter of the marquess of Villars, and that which came from turky by marseille.

j have forgot the romance which you speak of. j don't remember j have ever made verses upon this subject. forget it, forget all these deliriums of my youth. for my part j have drunk of the River lethé. j remember nothing but my friends.

. . . . . .

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